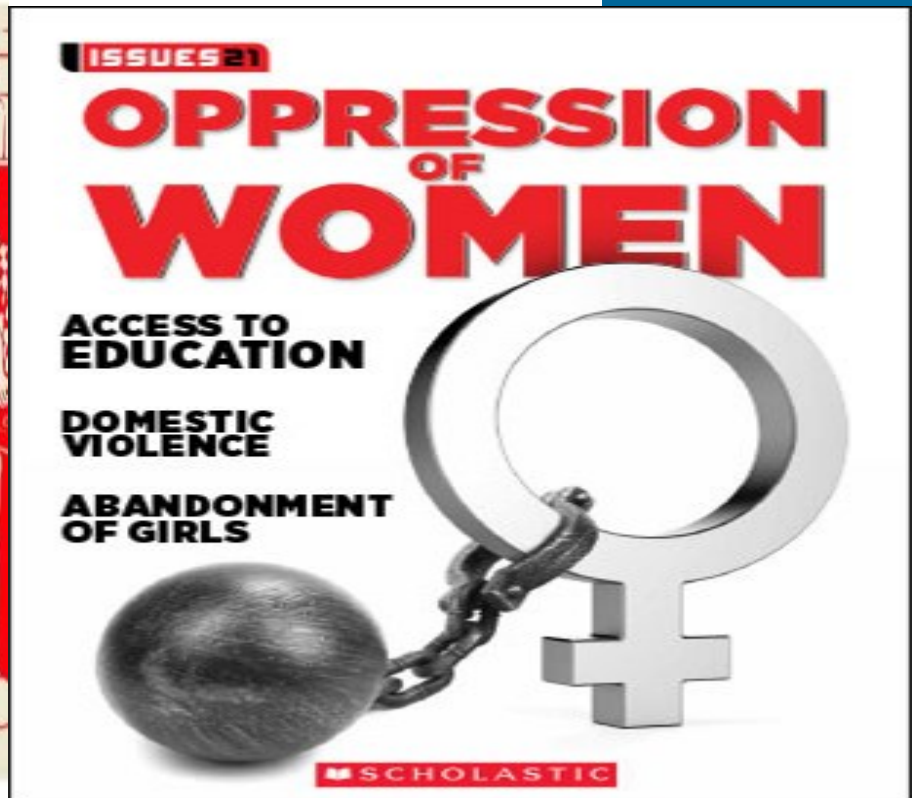


On the Eve of our President's Birthday : 30 June 2023

*A Critical Study of Women
Oppression in Alice Walker's
Select Novels*



Ms Magdelene Percy S



Department of English



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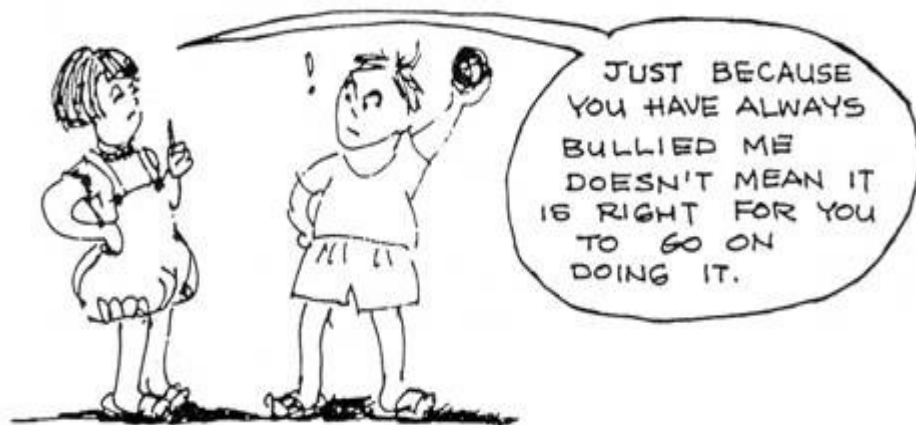
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Ms Magdelene Percy S

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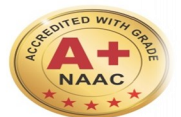


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**A CRITICAL STUDY OF WOMEN OPPRESSION IN ALICE
WALKER'S SELECT NOVELS**

Dissertation submitted to the

UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN

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BY

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My hearty thanks go to God who has given me the strength, health, wisdom and knowledge to complete the thesis.

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ABSTACT

The aim of thesis is to study Women Oppression in the Novels of Alice Walker. Alice Walker is one of the most prominent African American writers who created a great variety of women character in her rich opus. Among them, some of the most notable ones are the characters of black women who experience life marked by discrimination, violence, and prejudice. Oppression is present in various forms, inn every aspect of their lives, and they are forced to deal daily with sexism and racism. As a result of patriarchy, they are left with insecurities about their own bodies and minds, and a constant fear caused by make authority.

The first chapter is an introductory chapter. It gives a detailed account of the background of African American Literature. It talks about the aim , approach and criticism of the study. The second chapter explores the themes of Racism and Sexism in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. It highlights the dimensions of discord and violence against the African American Women through the female characters Ruth, Mem and Margaret. It analyses how these female characters suffer under the twin swords of Racism and Sexism.

The third chapter discuss the patriarchal oppression and gender discrimination in the novel *Meridian*. The heroine Meridian has to undergo the sufferings of domestic violence racial and sexual abuse. Yet, she struggles and to free herself from the patriarchal oppression and gender discriminations in African American community. The fourth chapter discusses about the Sexuality and sexual identity of the women in the novel *The Color Purple*. It discuss the new concept of sexuality dealt by the writer. It explores the troubles faced by the Marginalised groups such as women LGBT people. It describes the different oppressive forms of patriarchy suffered by African American women through the character celie.

The concluding chapter lists out the findings of the study.

Introduction

African-American literature is written by black Americans of African origin. Its themes include the exploration of black identity, the condemnation of racism, and the celebration of the unique aspects of African-American culture. The first published African-American fiction appeared in the mid-1800s and was similar in content to slave autobiographies. William Wells Brown and Charles Waddell Chesnutt are considered to be the first major African-American writers of fiction. African-American ethnic pride and creativity flourished during the 1920s. The period's exceptional expression of black literature came to be called the Harlem Renaissance. Important writers of fiction of the time include Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. In 1983, Alice Walker won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Color Purple*, a novel about an unwed mother forcibly separated from her children. A boom in black-oriented titles is the best way to describe the growth in the range and number of titles aimed at African-American readers over the years. African-American authors today are National Book Award and Pushcart Prize winners.

Black literature in America developed in the same way as White literature. That is, it began with pedagogic poetry and didactic prose such as slave narratives, diaries and sermons and was later on followed by lyric poetry and fiction and it also expanded to drama. Besides this, Black literature dealt with the social, literary, historical, political and economic conditions of the Black people. Most of the literature by African American writers describes past slavery and their culture, with regard to who they were and what the White people did to them. African American literature initially focused on the issue of slavery as presented in one of its popular subgenres called slave narratives. The history of African American people was the story of their forced journey from one continent to the other; a story of their oppression, slavery and liberation. In most of the works of African American writers, one finds a depiction of African cultures and the slave trade due to which many of the Africans lost their freedom. It is also the

story of their survival, of how they suffered misery and trouble during this period and of how they escaped from slavery. In America, the citizens of that country are aware of the nation's racial and cultural diversity. They came from different parts of the world carrying with them their distinctive cultures. Like other races, the Africans also came from different parts of Africa, but once they were in America, all of them became parts of the same oppressive system run by the Whites. Their black colour was treated as a sign of inferiority in America and was synonymous with slavery. The word 'Negro' came to English language through the Portuguese who were the first traders in the slave trade and who, resultantly, for the first time took Africans from Africa to Europe and America.

The experience of Blacks in America, for all its variety, has been a unique experience, and therefore the novels and short stories which illustrate that experience have also been special and have stood on their own. The point to emphasize is not only that there has been conformity between the experiences and the different stories, but that the stories have been similar to each other as well. While a number of literary movements and deviations were taking place in the nation at large over the past eighty years, Black fiction has continued to function within patterns peculiarly its own. It is the prevalence existence of the patterns, not simply of common external experiences, which makes the African American writing a realistic one. When one studies the life and culture of the African Americans, we find that they had been familiar with art, literature, music etc before their first appearance in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. In African American literature, we find traces of a number of West African concepts related to artistic creations. If we refer to the origins of African American literature and history, we realize that Black Americans are not without influence of their African past, culture and history. Meanwhile, the period of slavery continued for a long time and many generations of Blacks were lost till they were able to create African American literature and art. In short, we observe that, culturally speaking, the Black race did not come empty-handed to America from their

native continent of Africa. Therefore, it can be stated that African American literature has far deeper roots in the history of cultural and artistic products.

Black writers believe that their work is not inferior to White writer's work merely because the Whites have a fair colour and they do not have it. Black writers write about their culture, race, colour, beauty, their so-called ugliness, slavery, discrimination against them, their emancipation, etc. Culture is a basis of all their ideas, beliefs, values, images, truths, actions, etc. Books by African Americans are representative of all African Americans in the United States and it could be found that writings by African Americans generally are utopian, perfectionist, idealistic and optimistic. Most of the books written on the life of African Americans are written about how America has been proved to be an unjust society for the African Americans. Generally, Black literature is synonymous with literature of protest. They protest against exploitation, limitations, restrictions, discrimination, intolerance, inequality etc to which they are subjected by the Whites in the United States. Black literature springs from the life of the Black people and it records the experiences of Black life. In fact, life of those who come from Black race is as human as it is of any other race and is in no way inferior to the life of other races.

African American Literature is the Literature produced in English by the marginalised African slaves and their offspring in the United States of America. It has travelled many miles to attain the status of a separate genre of English Literature. It has evolved from humble diary narratives of the slaves into this magnificent form of Literature. It includes all the forms of Literatures like novels, poems, essays, short stories etc. When the journey to attain such a position in the American literary canon was a herculean task for African American men, it is obvious that the African American women writers had to strive harder. African American Literature proceeds to prosper to this day with the help of authors like Alice Walker and Toni Morrison who have been rated among the top writers in the United States of America.

Nowadays it has been accepted as an essential component of American Literature, with the top-selling novels of many African American writers including those of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker. African American women novelists offer a glimpse into the interpretation of African American experience and the exposition of that reality. Both authors use their native language and their literary convention to give different perceptions of the African experience. These women novelists explore the issues of freedom and equality which were denied to Blacks in the United States for a long time. Their text consists of the native accent present in the Black speech.

The African-American novel is the result of social and social powers that shape the creator's manner toward life. As opposed to the Euro-American novel, in any case, the African-American novel has its underlying foundations in the consolidated oral furthermore, scholarly practices of African-American culture. It is one of the representative artistic types of talk that dark Americans have acquired from Western culture and adjusted as they continued looking for status, force, and personality in a bigot white, man centric North American social field. The African-American book, at the end of the day, is not a solipsistic, self-referential semantic framework, yet a representative socio-social demonstration. 20th century Novelists.

Most of the themes in their novels include the examination of the subjects related to African American culture, racism, religion, feminism, poverty, slavery, etc. They expressed the feeble voices of the Black women in particular, in their novels. The authors of interest had double advantage of being a Black and a woman in a racially discriminated society. Hence their writings were authentic in delineating the lives of the African American people especially that of women. An insight into the history and evolution of the African American Literature will be an appropriate subject to begin the study. African American Literature is a body of Literature written by Americans of African lineage, beginning in the pre-revolutionary War period, continuing through Civil War, Reconstruction period, Harlem Renaissance, to the

contemporary Literature. To comprehend the genre of African American Literature, it is essential to explore the chronological order in which this Literature had developed. Afro-American Literature begins with the creations of writers such as Phillis Wheatly and Olaudah Equiano during late eighteenth century. Then it was succeeded by the slave narratives of the nineteenth century. Further it was succeeded by the Harlem Renaissance in 1920 which was a time of great development of this Literature and the Black arts. African American Writers have been well-known, by the highest awards, including the Nobel Prize to Toni Morrison and Pulitzer Prize for Alice Walker.

African American writing traces all the way back to African slave's soonest appearance in the New World in 1639, when they produced a language and writing of their own. At the core of this group of work lies the African American vernacular custom. This custom incorporates oral types of articulation existing before African slave's capacities to peruse and write in the English language. Consecrated components—like spirituals, gospel, and messages—offered pictures of an equitable God who might convey retribution upon the severe slave proprietors and salvation upon the people who experienced under this organization. Mainstream structures, like the blues, jazz, work tunes and rhymes, rap, messages, and folktales, detail the passionate pain related with being dark and seized, by prudence of race and class, in white America. The spirituals, work melodies, folktales, and lessons arose on the Southern slave ranch in the nineteenth century and offered approach to gospel music, the blues, jazz, and rap in the 20th century. These expressive structures were not initially delivered for mass course. They were ingroup types of communicating the real factors of their regular routines in America. These structures regularly included coded or mystery messages of bearing the ills of subjection.

A new genre of African American Literature developed. It is defined as the slave narratives which are the recordings that are written by the fleeing slaves about their lives in the

South after escaping enslavement. These narratives described the savageness of life under slavery, as well as they derived sympathy for the slaves. The slaves were recognised as individuals in these narratives.

The African American vernacular custom educates African American writing regarding subjugation and opportunity. Significant subjects during this period are protection from oppression and devotion to human poise. African American creators during this period scrutinized the establishment of subjection as they turned out to be progressively acquainted with the lessons of the Holy Bible. These scholars compared proficiency with opportunity. With their developing proficiency, African American creators spoke to the customary Christian convention of a general fraternity of humankind as a method of testing the ethical quality of subjugation.

Writers during the post-reconstruction time frame introduced the New Negro Renaissance, otherwise called the Harlem Renaissance. The completion of the primary cross-country railroad in 1869 helped the change of the American backwaters from one of modest communities to one of developing metropolitan habitats. One such focus was New York City, home to many distributing outlets and a shelter for African Americans looking for escape from the choking Jim Crow laws yielding authorized isolation in the South. Numerous African Americans got comfortable New York's overbuilt Harlem region, initially settled to house center and upper-working class whites. The prominence of jazz, the blues, and dance empowered interest in African American culture. Harlem before long became known as the Negro capital of the world. A significant number of the most powerful African American political and social associations. These components energized a local area that encouraged an innovative overflowing among African American essayists and specialists.

The African-American literary tradition implies the culture and tradition of suppressed people. The suppressed and oppressed people of African American race and society are placed in the literary writings of the writers. The writers exhibit the plights and pathos of the people with their artistic and creative expressions in the form of plays, poems, fictions and stories. The creations are well recognized in the intellectual scenario of the world. The African American writers are socio creative artists. It is an artistic form directly emanated from the collective social situation in which the Afro-American found himself. It is directly connected to the historical, economic, educational and social growth and development of people and as such maintains a unique position in the literature of world. The socio-creative art is what the black writers bring into existence when they sit down to reflect. They ponder on their grievous situations. Their artistic expressions are the results of their deep thoughts and critical analysis of their tragic circumstances. Their lives and their art in the same struggle. Every black writer is a product and part of black community. When he addresses his audiences, he will be in part expressing the life and needs of their community. The frame of reference to which he relates is his community. They are what they are because of their peculiar nature of the people of the country.

Alice Walker, whose full name is Alice Malsenior Walker, was born to sharecropper parents in Eatonton, Georgia, in 4 th February 1944. She grew up to become a highly acclaimed novelist, essayist and poet. She is best known for her 1982 novel *The Color Purple*, which won the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and soon was adapted for the big screen by Steven Spielberg. Walker is also known for her work as an activist. Walker was the eighth child of African American sharecroppers. While growing up she was accidentally blinded in one eye, and her mother gave her a typewriter, allowing her to write instead of doing chores. She received a scholarship to attend Spelman College, where she studied for two years before transferring to Sarah Lawrence College. After graduating in 1965, Walker moved to Mississippi and became

involved in the civil rights movement. She also began teaching and publishing short stories and essays. She got married in 1967, but the couple divorced in 1976. Walker's first book of poetry, *Once*, appeared in 1968, and her first novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970). Finally, the most famous novel is *The Color Purple* (1982), an epistolary novel, it depicts the growing up and self-realization of an African American woman between 1909 and 1947 in a town in Georgia, that she wrote when she moved to California.

African American writing since the 1970s includes a re-visitation of African American history and spotlights on connections inside the African American people group. This time of African American writing exhibits an expansion in ladies's composition and in abstract grant. Scholars like Toni Morrison and Alice Walker have contributed essentially to the field of African American expressions and letters. Morrison, the primary African American to get the Nobel Prize for writing, changed America's perspective on history and writing. Her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Song of Solomon* (1977) returns to - through generational connections, the African American folktale about a gathering of Africans who were sold into bondage in America, developed wings, and flew back to opportunity in Africa. Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Color Purple* (1982), changes the design of the conventional novel through a progression of letters that form the story. Walker investigates connections between ladies who succeed, notwithstanding the mistreatments they endure, similar as her scholarly predecessor Hurston. Walker, Morrison, and different journalists since the 1970s embrace the agonizing history of African American subjugation. They share a conviction that African Americans should possess their set of experiences to comprehend their embraces current circumstances.

With the end of the Civil War in 1865, countless African Americans recently liberated from the burden of subjugation in the South started to dream of more full interest in American culture, including political strengthening, equivalent financial freedom, and monetary and

social self-assurance. Shockingly, by the last part of the 1870s, that fantasy was generally dead, as racial oppression was immediately re-established to the Reconstruction South. White legislators on state and neighborhood levels passed severe racial isolation laws known as ‘Jim Crow laws’ that made African Americans. While few African Americans had the option to become landowners, most were taken advantage of as tenant farmers, a framework intended to keep them poor and frail.

At the tallness of the development, Harlem was the focal point of American culture. The area clamoured with African American-possessed and run distributing houses and papers, music organizations, playhouses, dance club, and nightclubs. The writing, music, and design they made characterized culture and ‘cool’ for blacks and white the same, in America and all throughout the planet. As the 1920s found some conclusion, so did the Harlem Renaissance. Its prime was sliced short generally because of the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and coming about Great Depression, which hurt African American-possessed organizations and distributions and made less monetary help for artistic expressions accessible from supporters, establishments, and dramatic associations. Notwithstanding, the Harlem Renaissance’s effect on America was permanent. The development carried notice to the extraordinary works of African American craftsmanship, and enlivened and impacted people in the future of African American specialists and educated people. The self-picture of African American life, character, and culture that rose up out of Harlem was sent to the world everywhere, testing the bigot and belittling generalizations of the Jim Crow South. In doing as such, it profoundly re-imagined how individuals of different races saw African Americans and comprehended the African American experience.

In particular, the Harlem Renaissance imparted in African Americans the nation over another soul of self-assurance and pride, another social awareness, and another obligation to political activism, all of which would give an establishment to the Civil Rights Movement of

the 1950s and 1960s. In doing as such, it approved the convictions of its organizers and pioneers like Alain Locke and Langston Hughes that workmanship could be a vehicle to work on the existences of the African Americans.

In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* of Alice Walker, role of patriarchy of Grange Copeland and Brownfield has been exposed and their patriarchal rights are indirectly demolished in this novel. They want to control and rule the lives of their women Margaret, Mem, Josie and Lorene. In *The Color Purple*, patriarchy establishes itself in Celie's acts of submission to all the males, recognising the male law. Ironically, Celie had to get remedy from this patriarchal suppression only from a male God. In *Meridian* The relationship between the history of ordinary black folk, particularly women, and the philosophical character are discussed. While taking into account the importance of gender roles in the novels of it might be noted that they present a modified will power of women against both Black and White men. They also present the strength and faith that women can give themselves mutually. The happiness of women in being content with their lives is also presented. Black women are treated worse than animals both domestically and in fields. Black women are subjected to the tyranny of both the Black and the White males. Therefore, African American Literature portrays the sufferings of its characters based upon their temperament, their deeds and their intellect.

Black feminism holds the view that sexism and racism are bound together. This being bound situation is called intersectionality. Black feminism as a concept and movement came into being because the black feminists felt that the feminist movement led by white women did not address the experiences, agonies, sufferings and other serious issues of the black women. National Black Women Organization was formed in 1973. Alice Walker used the word 'womanism' in 1979. 'Womanism' is a black feminist theory, meaning 'a black feminist or a feminist of colour.' The experiences of black men gave rise to a particular understanding of their (black women's) position in relation to sexism, class operation and racism. The feminist

movement was started in England, France, America and various places with the notion that women wear suffer us at the hands of the male dominated society which is basically 'sexist', 'discrimination on the basis of gender' and equal right/opportunity was demanded but the case of black women was quite different. They had to suffer because they were women and more because they were black.

Black women joined the feminist movement to put an end to sexist oppression but soon they were to realize the harsh reality that white women were hardly concerned with the various problems faced by the non-white women. The participants came to realize that the feminist movement was concerned with the small minority who had organized the movement. Their role in the movement was never given due credit and their efforts went unnoticed. The racial segregation against the black women was so brazen that the term 'women' meant "white women" and the term 'blacks' signified 'black men.' Black women were always destined to suffer from stereotyping and were portrayed negatively and suffered many atrocities like persecution, beating, torture, etc. This cruel, pathetic, and piteous racial attitude of white female folk towards black women resulted in the unavoidable emergence of women's organizations whose sole aim was to end racism. Black feminism stresses upon the fact that sexism, racism, and class oppression are very much interlinked and intersectional. Black feminists had to face different challenges: to show other black females that feminism was not a white women movement, to persuade and command white women to share power with them and to fight to end the misogynist tendencies of Black Nationalism. The white feminist theorists did not take cognizance of issues related to racism, gender discrimination, and class conflict and such urgencies of black female experience. The exclusion of black women from the feminist theory and antiracist discourses became clear for the first time in the social movements of the 1960s and 70s which fought for racial and gender equality.

The Black Feminist Movement grew out of, and in response to, the Black Liberation Movement and the Women's Movement. In an effort to meet the needs of black women who felt they were being racially oppressed in the Women's Movement and sexually oppressed in the Black Liberation Movement, the Black Feminist Movement was formed. Often, 'black' was equated with black men and 'woman' was equated with white women. As a result, black women were an invisible group whose existence and needs were ignored. The purpose of the movement was to develop theory which could adequately address the way race, gender, and class were interconnected in their lives and to take action to stop racist, sexist, and classist discrimination.

Black women who participated in the Black Liberation Movement and the Women's Movement were often discriminated against sexually and racially. Although neither all the black men nor all the white women in their respective movements were sexist and racist, enough of those with powerful influence were able to make the lives of the black women in these groups almost unbearable. This section investigates the treatment of black women in these two movements and aims to show how, due to the inability of black men and white women to acknowledge and denounce their oppression of black women, the movements were unable to meet the needs of black women and prompted the formation of the Black Feminist Movement.

The movement, though ostensibly for the liberation of the black race, was in word and deed for the liberation of the black male. Race was extremely sexualized in the rhetoric of the movement. Freedom was equated with manhood and the freedom of blacks with the redemption of black masculinity. Take, for example, the assumption that racism is more harmful to black men than it is to black women because the real tragedy of racism is the loss of manhood; this assumption illustrates both an acceptance of masculinity defined within the context of patriarchy as well as a disregard for the human need for integrity and liberty felt by both men

and women. Many black men in the movement were interested in controlling black women's sexuality.

As well, there was disregard for the humanity and equality of black women. Black men in the Black Liberation Movement often made sexist statements which were largely accepted without criticism. It must be stressed that it was not only many of the men but also a great number of the women in the Black Liberation Movements who were enforcing strict gender roles on black women. In much the same way that women in dominant society do not resist but encourage sexism, black women fell prey to perpetuating patriarchy within the black community.

Faced with the sexism of black men and the racism of white women, black women in their respective movements had two choices: they could remain in the movements and try to educate non-black or non-female comrades about their needs, or they could form a movement of their own. The first alternative, though noble in its intent, was not a viable option. While it is true that black men needed to be educated about the effects of sexism and white women about the effects of racism on black women's lives, it was not solely the responsibility of black women to educate them.

Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance and to educate men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns. Now it is the task of women of Color to educate white women-in the face of tremendous resistance-as to our existence, our differences, our relative roles in our joint survival. This is a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought. In light of these facts, the women decided to forge their own movement, the Black Feminist Movement. Building a Black Feminist

Movement was not an easy task. Despite the need for such a movement, there were few black women in the early 1970s who were willing to identify themselves as feminists.

Black feminist thought is an oppositional force. It exists as a response to the oppression faced by Black women in the United States and globally. Earlier considerations of oppression were often unidimensional; they examined either race or class or gender. Black feminism argues that this approach to understanding oppression erases Black women and the multidimensional oppression that they face. The importance of intersectionality through an analysis of three cases with Black women plaintiffs. Under Black feminist thought, oppression is understood and treated as a complex system of interlocking dimensions, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism and classism. Oppression is characterized as being in a ‘dialectical relationship’ with Black women’s activism as its existence spurs Black women to fight oppressive practices and their underlying ideas. Collins emphasis on the responsibility people who theorize about and understand the nature of oppression have to act on their knowledge is key to the actualization of Black feminism.

Thus, the above passages have enlightened the motives of the author of this study. Moreover, the study explores into their writings and their contributions to the Literature in general through the lens of Black Feminist Criticism and the concept of ‘Womenism’. The passages have also discussed the relevance in choose author and their select novels to argue the cause about Women Oppression, racism and feminism. The following chapter explores the elements of racism and sexism in the novel *The Third Life Grange of Copeland*.

Chapter -1

Racism and Sexism in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*

Racism and Sexism in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*

The first novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* written by Walker, graphically exposes the dimensions of discord and violence operating at several stages at the individual and the community levels. The strife experienced at these levels is internal and external in character. Walker also highlights the defence mechanisms adopted by the Afro-Americans to survive the assault of oppression and suggests discord resolutions for the raging conflicts at hand. This novel projects many of her prevalent themes, like , race-relations, alienation, search for identity, psychic and physical oppression of women through marriage, motherhood and rape, and particularly, the domination of the powerless women by the equally powerless men. Black literature in America is distinguished for its mirroring of black social reality and Walker has presented some memorable reminiscences of black life.

Being an African American writer, Walker closely examines the ways in which the world around black women has deeply affected their physical and emotional being. Her major concern in her writing is about white and black men's oppression upon black women and their attempt to resist it in the society governed by racism, sexism and patriarchy. She addresses the very difficult and unspoken issues of black women, their strength, experiences and womanhood. She urges her women to break the silence. African American women have been made victim of racial discrimination by the white community and sexual repression by black males of their own community. They have been made prey of both racism and sexism. It is a common experience of black women in America. Afro- American women do have their own peculiar world and experiences unlike any white or black men and white women. Roby Ward and Diane Price Herndl also remark, 'Black women are doubly marginalized' (Ward and Herndl 741). They have to fight not only against white patriarchy and white women's racism but also against sexism of black men within their own race. So, to be black and female is to suffer from the twin disadvantages of racial discrimination and gender bias. Being black, the

African women suffer from racism; being females they are the victims of sexual atrocities at the hands of the white patriarchs as well as the black male. Being former slaves, black people are forced to live on scarce resources and are compelled to remain poor. Needless to say, black women are under financial scarcity within the black community due to gender difference. They The development of African American Women's fiction is a mirror-image of the intensity of the relationship between sexism and racism in America. African American women writers emerge from a particular historical context: a context where they were oppressed hundreds of years together. Through their writings the authors create a self-affirming protagonist; protagonists who are able to discover their inherent divinity. This spiritual awakening enables these characters to emerge from the context of oppression and at least begin to assert, if not achieve their innate potential are confined to the lowest-paying jobs and made less than half of what white women made. They are positioned within the structures of power in fundamentally different ways than white women.

In other words, the black women in America are made victims of triple jeopardy-racism, sexism, and classicism. This triple burden has restricted black women from being full human beings to render meaningful participation in society. Suffering at the hands of both black and white men, the American black women have to fight for survival both inside and outside their houses. Walker sees American black women carrying triple consciousness and deals with this theme in her fiction works.

The Harlem Renaissance, an African - American social development of the 1920s and 1930 is differently know as 'the New Negro, Movement' and 'The New Negro Renaissance'. During this development the standard distributer and pundits viewed African-American Literature in a serious way it drawn in huge consideration from the country on the loose. A huge movement of African-Americans started during World War I, hitting its high point during World War II. during this Great Migration, Black individuals left the bigotry and gotten

comfortable northern urban areas like Chicago, where they looked for some kind of employment in plants and different areas of the economy.

The movement delivered another feeling of autonomy operating at a profit Black local area and added to the dynamic Black metropolitan culture seen during the Harlem Renaissance. The relocation likewise enabled the developing American Civil Rights development, which established a powerful connection with Black essayists during the 1940s, '50s and '60. Similarly, as Black activists were pushing to end isolation and bigotry and make another feeling of Black Patriotism, so too were Black creators endeavouring to resolve these issues with their compositions. Among them dark compose the time of the last part of the 1940's was the time of Richard Wright. The time of the 1960's was the time of James Baldwin. With the ascent of patriotism and autonomous states in African, and the quick difference in the situation with the Negro in the United States, the material utilized by dark essayists and their treatment of it did, of need, mirror a splitting away from the old securing.

The issue of violence against women is viewed as a grave violation of common liberties that happens across race, age, culture, and religion around the world. It incorporates any demonstration or direct that might cause passing or physical, mental, or sexual mischief to ladies – regardless of whether in general society or private circle – that is done exclusively dependent on sex. The issue of brutality against ladies has been talked about, discussed, campaigned, and battled for in late many years; and much exploration on the frequency, detailing, and ramifications of such viciousness against ladies has additionally been directed in numerous locales and nations. These coordinated dissident endeavours prompted the principal revelation that perceived the need to give ladies the rights to uniformity, security, freedom, uprightness, and poise of every individual.

Oppression of women and violence against women are two experiences whose origins are debatable, but whose existence is anathema to a large proportion of humanity. Some

cultures permit or even legislate the oppression of women, while some cultures indirectly allow it . There are a wide range of actions across cultures that perpetuate the oppression of women and the appearance of condoning violence against women. These actions include economic disadvantages, disproportionately lenient sentences or legal ramifications for oppressing women or committing acts of violence against them, difficulty in bringing successful legal actions against perpetrators of oppression or violence against women, laws that treat women differently than men, and general sexism in various segments of society.

The origins of the two constructs will be presented followed by the factors that perpetuate their existence. While the origins of oppression and violence against women are not agreed upon by all academic researchers, the general perspective relates the early activities and separation of labor based on biological imperatives to the resulting outcomes and the potential for male dominant societies. The separation of roles among the genders began in the earliest phase of human development. In a hunter and gatherer society, the biological differences between men and women determined their role in this type of society . During this separation of roles in society, some authors believe that the male role as a hunter played a significant part in the development of skills that related to the use of weapons and the use of aggression towards a beneficial end . To further this aggressive attitude and the separation between the genders, males in nomadic tribes were responsible for animal breeding.

Animal breeding was a key role and was treated in a similar fashion to the place of women in that society. Since men were responsible for they key factors that led to a functioning society, women's roles were reduced to bearing and raising children. Since men were the gender that explored the limits and boundaries of each individual society, it was men that first encountered other tribes or other cultures and it was men that first explored the concept of increasing one group's power and property through the conquering of another group of people. This was the first step in human society's development towards the goal of accumulating power

and property. The accumulation of property, which was done mostly by force, resulted in a disproportionate distribution of wealth and power among early tribes and cultures. The male gender was viewed as almost entirely responsible for this increase in power. As a result, the male place in society began to become one of power and prestige, which also resulted in the accumulation of wealth, from a very early point in human societal development. While some opponents of feminism have noted that this was a result of male biological dominance, several authors have shown that it was also in large part due to the fact that women were tied down by their role in society as care-givers and agricultural overseers. This place in society prevented women from being free to explore the boundaries of their societies.

A few of these societies have been identified as aboriginal cultures in Australia. In that time and place in history, women were not given democratic rights, nor even treated as being productive members of a cooperative society. These obscure societies, ones that are not considered widespread or mainstream among the majority of the world's population, were not alone in subjugating women. African tribes also often viewed women as non-equal members of society. But tribes and cultures that have not developed at the same rate as the industrial world were not alone in this regard either.

Religions, which have been a key sociological force for thousands of years, played a significant role in providing an excuse or a reason for the oppression of women. Judeo-Christian belief structures are not alone in this regard. Arabic, Indian, and Chinese belief structures, to different degrees and extents, also placed women as secondary citizens. The developed world is almost entirely a form of Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, or Jewish. Together, those religions comprise well over 80% of the world's population and in every one of those religions; the woman's role is seen as unequal to the male role. Religions, however, did not direct the evolution of the developed world and industrialization has, to some extent lessened

the dependence on a male-dominated society, but not nearly to the point of being equal. Religions also did not prevent or mitigate the current occurrence of violence against women.

Walker studies the overall condition of black women and questions the social convention of mainstream society dominated by the whites in America. She prefers womanism rather than feminism to make the close study of the actual inner and outer goings of African American women's life. She lays an emphasis on female solidarity to fight against white's racism and black male's sexism. She examines black women's quest for selfhood through individual relationship to the community. Her female characters are on search of psychological health and wholeness and eventually achieve it when they are able to fight against oppression. They embody the struggle of being a triple minority- both black and female. One finds Walker unfolding the oppression of black women in her fiction works. In other words, Walker's fiction depicts the emotional, spiritual and physical devastation that occur when the family trust is betrayed. Her focus is on black women who grow to reside in a larger world and struggle to achieve independent identity beyond male domination.

Walker is sensitive to the racial undercurrents of American society. As a militant black woman writer engaged in liberation struggle, she strongly states that the major concern of black women's literature should be on black women's struggle for self-definition. It should encourage black women to struggle against the racial or sexual oppression upon them in male dominated society.

Walker uses the four major seminal themes in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, to highlight the causes and the permeation of discord in the lives of the Afro-Americans. First, she deals with the colour contrast between the blacks and the whites. Secondly, she maintains that slavery, a blot on American history and culture, had reduced the blacks to an existence of non-humans. Thirdly, she exposes the white man's narrow-minded prejudices against the

blacks. Lastly, she presents the evils among the blacks themselves that cause untold miseries in black lives, especially black women.

Walker narrates in detail the defence mechanisms which the blacks adopted to transform themselves from object to subject and from silence into speech. They had to assume a contrived identity, a false image to avert the aggression they had faced against the white oppressors. The black women had to wear masks in order to escape the brutality of their own males as well as the lust of the white masters. The blacks adopted a deliberate insensitivity or turned 'invisible' in response to the white violence and subjugation. They resorted to trickery, one of the survival techniques of their ancestors and used their new identity as trickster to salvage and retain whatever dignity they possessed.

The novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* covers a period of American history from 1920s to the peak of the Civil Rights Movement in the early 1960s. It focuses on the black family, the Copelands and tells the history of three generations - Grange, his son Brownfield and his grandchild Ruth – and in the process, records the speech, 'imagination' and 'fantasies' constituting their collective consciousness. It is devoted to the narratives of inter-racial antagonisms, abuses of Afro-American internal familial conflicts, self-hatred and is designed primarily from the point of view of the Southern black men. Walker brings to light the protagonist's perception of his past as crucial to his personal transformation in the present and possibility of change in the future. In the first part of the novel, she graphically lays out the dreary pattern of life for Grange, the father, whose life is dominated by his response to an oppressive and dehumanizing socio-economic structure of share cropping which deprives him of his personhood. With no emancipation in view, and possessed with self-hatred, he inflicts painful violence on his wife, Margaret denies parental love and care to his son Brownfield.

The novel sets up the social pattern in which the powerlessness of the black men in the face of the white hostility, leads them to victimize the black women, especially their wives, and is naturalistic in its depiction of the repetition of racial hatred and personal oppression. Thus, a legacy of violence and revulsion is handed over to his son who repeats the same pattern of despair resulting in the murder of his wife Mem and his complete degeneration. Both father and son seek solace at the destination of Josie, a prostitute.

In *The Third Life*, both male and female characters are caught beneath the brutally oppressive social machinery. Calvin Hernton remarks about the indispensability of the sexuality of the American racism:

The sexualization of racism in the United States is a unique phenomenon in the history of mankind; it is anomaly of the first order. In fact, there is sexual involvement, at once real and vicarious, connecting white and black people in America that spans the history of the country from the era of slavery to the present, an involvement so immaculate and yet so perverse, so ethereal and yet so concrete that all race relations tend to be, however subtle, sex relations. (Hernton 7)

With delight he beats her until she is haggard and ugly totally without view, without a sky and tells her that nobody will hire her because she is a snaggle too the old plow mule and subjects her to several years of ‘Saturday-night beatings’. Mem chooses to put herself in the service of an illiterate degenerate who strips her of her damn proper language and her efforts to enhance their standard of living are thwarted by him. She is brought back to lowness by the weakness of her womb as he interprets her likeness to movement and freedom as an outcome of his own depleted life and finally murders her.

The powerlessness Walker's women impression is often reaffirmed by the physical abuse they endure in their marriages, through rape and motherhood, an entrapment of their own sexuality. As a result, black women find themselves 'suspended' economically and psychologically, carrying the burden of a twofold repression as black persons and as women but 'womanism', a universalist stance, has brought Alice Walker and her characters safely to the land of psychic freedom after a perilous journey fraught with fear, self-hate, and guilt. Grange and Brownfield shed their human characteristics in the presence of the white men, making their daily life a masking ritual, steeped in silence. The mechanical quality of their movements and attitudes is the answer to the total subjugation by a cynical, hypocritical white-dominated world. Brownfield observes:

When the truck came, his father's face froze into an unnaturally bland mask ... more impenetrable than his silence. One who could by his presence alone turn his father into a stone or a robot, an object or a cipher or a piece of dirt, except for the sharp bitter odour of sweat, fear and something indefinite... whose source was forcibly contained in flesh. (*The Third* 67)

This odour is the blackness of a black which is their only physical difference from a white and is responsible for the emotional and spiritual vacuum that had blighted their lives. Colour as a determining factor in the black life is also seen at work when Grange and Margaret name their new born son, Brownfield as the first thing they see, is 'brownish colour fields'. Becoming a victim of racism himself, Brownfield reproaches and belittles his educated wife with this colour contrast in mind,

He liked to sling the perfection of white women at her because colour was something she could not change and as his own coloured skin annoyed him he meant hers to humble her. ..You ain't white, but even as he said this, he hated

with his whole heart the women he wanted and did not want his wife to imitate. (*The Third* 88)

The Copeland family has no option but to give vent to the discord faced in their early lives by remaining silent. Brownfield grows conscious of the long periods of uninterrupted quiet. His father almost never speaks to him, while his mother does not have a thing to say that does not in some way show her submission to his father. Silence characterizes their feelings of oppression punctuated sometimes by their inarticulate mumblings which also signifies their acceptance of hopelessness. Many of the characters in this novel waver between an intense love for the father and an equally intense self-hatred engendered by the rejection of the father. The father's rejection of his child is very much related to his view of the child's future as man or woman. So Grange rejects Brownfield because he believes he is a man. Brownfield becomes an abusive father when he realizes that he cannot give his daughters the gifts that will allow them to be ladies. Brownfield kills his son as he does not foresee any future for him. The instinct in all living things to see their offspring well placed is reversed in Brownfield's mind. In the course of the novel, Walker stitches together squares that grotesquely reveal how dependent the children are on the humanness or inhumanness of their father. One of these squares, perhaps more than any other in the book, lays out the damage done to Brownfield by his father and by his own inability to accept responsibility for his son.

Grange taught her untaught history through his dance; she glimpsed a homeland she had never known and felt the pattering of the drums. The beginning of her life with Grange was the beginning of her initiation into a world of perplexity and a knowledge of impersonal cruelty beyond what she had known in her own home. (*The Third* 190)

This mark of oppression is seen in Brownfield, a case of blighted growth due to the blight of slavery that he is born into. Ruth, who is terrorised by her own father at home, is able to face a soft side of life with her grandfather. This is the real beginning of the life for both of them.

Yet in spite of his commitment to protect Ruth from the outside world, Grange inexplicably instructs the lessons of history, presumably learned during his years in Harlem. Ruth very early comprehends the destructive power of racism, and she learns that racism is not limited to whites alone. As a sixth grader, she receives a new world history text book new to her but previously used and discarded by students in all-white school. Inside the cover of the book she finds a drawing and Orientals and American Indians, is the caricature of a Blackman as a sewage, with a bone through his nose, sitting in front of a pot of boiling water as if he were waiting to cook 'Visiting Missionary'. The word leaped out at Ruth like a slap in the face.

They are evil

They are blue eyed devils

They are your natural enemy

Stay away from them hypocrites or they will destroy you

They didn't do nothing to me, I think you making

A mistake. (*The Third* 198)

In their long talk, Grange speaks of the liberating power of violence, but he never tells her about the violence he committed in New York. Walker maintains that the narrow-minded white prejudice overshadows much of American life and letters. In his second life in North, he tries to save the life of a drowning pregnant white woman who rejects his goodwill by categorizing him as a 'thing' and calling him a 'nigger' and with a tone of disgust, she embraces her watery grave. The feelings of futility and the conflict at being trapped within the sharecropping web does not prompt Grange to question the legitimacy of the system. Instead, he concludes that to regain his manhood and self-respect, he must kill their oppressors. Walker does not present

industrial labour as a probable solution to the poverty faced by Grange, but this journey as a quest for psychic wholeness, leads to a radical conversion which prepares Grange for his third life.

The story starts with a little youngster named Brownfield remaining with his mom, Margaret, and his dad, Grange, motto farewell to his uncle Silas and Aunt Marilyn and their kids as they derive away. Brownfield is humiliated by the state of the country road outside his modest house, which is not treating his uncle's extravagant new vehicle well indeed. Brownfield sees the general abundance of his cousins and accepts that in the North and was away from the South.

Grange is a tenant farmer who started his existence with Margaret hopeful and expecting achievement however he has coagulated over the course of the years as his obligation has developed to extents that destruction any fantasies of a superior life. Grange is baffled and furious, infrequently addresses his child, and is much of the time inebriated and savage both towards Margaret and Brownfield. Grange starts laying down around Josie. Josie has a niece named Mem who has been to school, and who talks with a style and clean that intrigues individuals. This shocks Margaret, who starts to act in manners intended to incense her significant other, most remarkably by laying down with white men. At the point when Margaret becomes pregnant and conveys a fair looking child clearly fathered by a white man, Grange leaves her and the kids and heads north, wanting to get away from the neediness and bigotry he lives in. Margaret loses hope when her better half leaves, and kills the infant youngster and ends it all. Brownfield ends up deserted and alone. Not set to recurrent his dad's missteps, starting with his choice not to work for the property manager and become buried paying off debtors the manner in which his dad was. He meets Josie, and without understanding that she is the one who took part in an improper predicament with Grange, he starts seeing her sincerely

also, and hence meets Mem. Brownfield becomes hopelessly enamoured with the delightful, taught young lady.

Mem is hopeful, and yearns for an existence of working class steadiness. Brownfield accidentally begins down similar way as his dad; expecting to help Mem and the kids she before long has with him, he takes on a tenant farmer's job similarly as, getting going confident that he will actually want to make a sufficient living to give his young family a beginning. Actually like his dad, in any case, he starts to slide into obligation and misery as the manipulated sharecropping situation neutralizes him and baffles each endeavor to break free. Mem figures out how to get occupations for herself and Brownfield just as a respectable house; this drives Brownfield mad as he considers it to be an affront that his better half wants to make courses of action for them. In a liquor energized rage, Brownfield pounds the life out of his significant other Mem; he is captured and condemned to seven years in prison.

Up north, Grange Copeland carries on with his subsequent life. He tracks down that the North, rather than a stronghold of racial balance and opportunity, is nearly pretty much as severely bigoted as the South, however without the express lawful and social designs of the last mentioned. He gets progressively upset as he gradually acknowledges how the entire arrangement of present-day life is intended to abuse and control him. One day he strolls through a recreation centre and sees a white lady battling in the water; she is suffocating. Grange at first thinks to protect her, however at that point he stops himself and looks as she suffocates. Grange believes himself to be renewed by this demonstration, a renewed person. He gets back toward the South, where his granddaughter Ruth is however alone as Brownfield seemed to be. Grange chooses to submit his third life to his granddaughter trying to change the examples that have destined him and his child to hopelessness and savagery. He visits Brownfield and admits his blame, recognizing that his conduct drove Margaret to self-destruction and by implication drove Brownfield to kill his better half.

Grange really focuses on Ruth and will not let her work. He gets her costly dresses and books, and Ruth accepts that she is exceptional to some extent as a result of how her grandfather treats her. Ruth starts to become keen on and engaged with the Civil Rights development starting to acquire force in the South. Brownfield is let out of jail and declares his parental authority over Ruth, requesting that Grange let him have her. Still up in the air to save Ruth, and when Brownfield comes to go up against them, Grange kills his child to guarantee Ruth's opportunity.

In the third part of his life, Grange, assumes responsibility for his thoughts and actions. He is able to love himself and his grandchild Ruth and changes the motifs in the pattern that had made up the guilt of his life with the possibility of surviving whole. This revelation resides not in his repulsion of the whites, but in his love for his granddaughter Ruth, his reverence for the land, his Afro- American Southern heritage and thus locates his needs for his racial identity- a sense of place and a feeling of family and community. Walker agrees that while the system of sharecropping is essentially dehumanizing, one has the possibility to transcend that dehumanization, just as Grange is able to transform his existence, by moving towards the North where he experiences an enlightenment of learning to love and to assume responsibility for his actions. Brownfield, in his extreme passivity, self-destructs refusing to renew or change himself, and wallows in poverty, illness, hopelessness and succumbs to his violent fate. Walker's fiction is deeply preoccupied with the search for human liberation through motion and open journeying. Representative slave narratives usually conclude with the hero pointed "north" as they look for stability and secure identity.

The Third Life offers a complex view of the journey. Central to the novel there is a powerful thematic discord between the characters, strong desire for a stable life centring on 'a home' and their equally strong inclination towards a radical change, a 'new life' that could be possible by settling down in a different place. This is evident in Brownfield, who dreams of a

mansion and a car, but has to confront the cold white world which freezes his life. Grange's break in New York is considered 'whole and psychic' which prepares him in his third life for a rich and spiritually compelling world, a sanctuary, a refuge without fear and hatred which had permeated his earlier two lives. In an attempt to redeem Ruth, his grandchild, from the evils of slavery, Grange tells her the story of Exodus from the Holy Bible to strengthen her imagination for flight. He hopes that Ruth will be a representative of the future who believes in the viability of change.

Ruth exhibits the streak of hope to survive a whole without being a martyr like Margaret and Mem. She eagerly reads the books that Grange steals from the library, telling her that the world was not as big then, as it is now and he encourages her to leave Baker County to fulfill the deepest yearnings of her evolving self. A crucial phase of Ruth's development is her growing awareness of society as a dynamic process instead of a 'static hierarchy' and by the end of the novel, Ruth feels, she will transform her world.

People of color have consistently served on the forefront in the battle for equity. In spite of the fact that their commitments were now and then neglected in both the Civil Rights and Women's Movements, their force, versatility, and mental fortitude could not possibly be more significant. Individuals of color have a particular angle from which to comprehend the crossing point of race and sex and their exceptional experience of abuse. The ladies featured in here are associated by a complex organization of activists that traverses a few ages.

Walker through the novel has argued that passion for life is a sure possibility when one develops racial consciousness and the need to be financially independent despite circumcising circumstances. Grange gatherings encourage to go to his home town Georgia not resentful by terrible consequences, or whites but with a new passion for life. He changes his personality with the racial consciousness and racial pride, that he has

developed during his sojourn up North. He avoids sharecropping and starts his own livelihood. After going to Georgia, he buys a farm, meets his ex-mistress Josie. He meets his son Brownfield after many years, and finds him stuck up, in the same panicky system of sharecropping. He promises him that he would assist him monetarily. Grange realizes that the black man in America is abused to become an abuser of sorts. Grange's personality changes on the whole when he metamorphoses into a better human being with a strong humane individuality. He mellows as an old man and helps Mem, Brownfield's wife and his Grandchildren. In fact, he delivers Ruth, his youngest grandchild into the real world, when the mid-wife does not come in time. This act has a symbolic significance in the novel. It implies that though it is Mem who gives birth to Ruth, it is Grange as a grandfather, mentor, guardian, father and mother who prepares her for life. Walker has shown a womanist in the making through Ruth Copeland. Brownfield, foil to Grange in everything, hates the fact that his father loves and takes care of his grandchildren though he has been neglected by him. Grange expects that Brownfield would change for the better and turn into a new leaf. But the devastating white plantation system makes him a man with a murky mind that he suffers ,

The novel *The Third life of Grange Copeland* exposes the pattern of terror over a span of sixty years in the lives of a Black family of share croppers. Grange's 'first life' with his wife and their only child, Brownfield in a rundown shack owned by the white man is a failure. Hopelessly in debt and degraded by poverty, Grange and Margaret succumb to endless rounds of hard work, carousing, violence and repentance. Grange heads for a nearby Juke joint 'Dew Drop Inn' owned by Josie, a local whore.

Grange finds solace in the arms of Josie. The only option of Margaret is to join the Saturday nights escapades, drinking, Like her husband, finding solace in sex first with her fellow worker and finally with her white boss. The third life is predominantly occupied by

Ruth, granddaughter of Grange. After being released from prison Brownfield gains custody of Ruth. Grange shoots himself in the work room in front of the judge and then goes to his woods to die. Grange's third incarnation starts from exile in the north. Ruth always carries in her heart what all he had taught her about joy and survival. The life of Black people in America is mixed with fear and hope. Walker has tried to tell us about the inner lives of Black people particularly the Black children who grow to become the urban poor. The tragedy which is happening to every man, woman and child is merely part of something called an Exploitation and oppression lead to the total emancipation of both the characters and the society. In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* Walker graphically traces out the reason for emancipation of Copeland men, women and children. Grange Copeland the title hero has been imprisoned by the dehumanizing effect of the southern sharecropping system. Grange and his son Brownfield become brutes as the white owners expect them to be.

Walker skillfully depicts Brownfield turning into a murderous whining beast. Her sympathy, however is plainly with his wife as with all black women, whom she sees as the victims of both whites and their own husbands. She sympathizes with Brownfield as the impact of poverty and the psychic starvation has made him unable to love. This poverty has caused Grange to desert his family, but he triumphs over it in his second life.

Life is less important to her than her feelings of superiority. Grange takes the responsibility for the woman's death by naming it murder. Killing is the necessary condition for life under any system of oppression. He acts with a sense of justice and accepts role of a moral hard man, who acts not for himself but for some great social good and with his changed attitude he moves back to south.

Masculinity is an inevitable topic in Walker's novels. In the principal scene among father and child after Brownfield's delivery from jail, Grange explains a meaning of masculinity that anxieties obligation regarding one's activities. Grange laments that he had

endeavored to state his masculinity by utilizing Josie and leaving his better half. In his third life, Grange rethinks masculinity as far as dedication to spouse and youngsters and a pledge to satisfying one's family obligations notwithstanding racial abuse.

The novel is a portrayal of African American history with race, class and sexual orientation issues. This novel sets a legitimate ground for Walker's later books. *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is trailed by *Meridian*. It analyzes the issues of sexism, penances of ladies in the Civil Rights Movement and battle for social change. The novel happens in 1960s in America. It was the time of dark dissents, opportunity rides, walks, deaths and concealment. African American needed to endure of sub-par parts, social disparity and destitution. African Americans were not allowed to enter the instructive framework and social collaboration was denied for them. In the meantime President John F. Kennedy had consented to the Civil Rights Act.

Walker demonstrates that there impacts make the general population baffled and fierce as appeared in the novel. It is the narrative of the three existences of Grange from 1920 to 1960. These three lives are the principal lives in the American South: the first life as a tenant farmer; the second life in New York as a worker and the third life again in the South. He is the delegate of African Americans in the South amid the main portion of the twentieth century. It can be taken as the portrayal of history of African Americans, a background marked by savagery and mistreatment.

A number of African American writers have contributed a great deal to the American literature. Alice Walker is one of them, who has left her imprint on several generations of readers. She emerges on the African American literary scene in 1968 with her first poetry volume *Once*. She has tried her hand on almost all the genres of literature till date. One of the great contributions to the African American literature is her ideology of Womanism. The concept of Womanism is a variant for the concept of feminism. Feminism is taken to be

insufficient to discuss the issues of black women and the women of colour. Therefore there was a need of an ideology that would present the issues of women in literature. Alice Walker coined the term to place the black women in history and culture. This concept has a great influence on the women or gender studies. This impact has reached to Africa and many women writers have accepted it as an analytical tool for literary studies.

In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* one can follow the social attributes of African Americans. The Copeland family is an agent of their bigger group in American culture. Every individual from the family tries to accomplish singular acknowledgment. Their racial personality attests their place in American culture. In spite of the fact that they are persecuted, they are associated with each other. At the point when there is a fight in the family they end up anxiously. Walker explains her bitter experiences in the interview taken by John O'Brien:

I have day dreamed not of fairytales but of falling on swords of putting guns to my heart or head and of slashing my wrists with a razor. For a long time I thought I was very ugly and disfigured. This made me shy and timid, and often reacted to insults that were not intended. I discovered the cruelty of children, and of relatives, and could not recognize it as the curiosity it was. I believe, though, it was from this period from my solitary, lonely position the position of an outcast that I began to really see people and things, and to really notice relationships and to learn to be patient enough to care about how they turned out. I no longer felt like the little girl I was, I felt old, and filled with shame, I retreated into solitude, and read stories and began to write poems. (O'Brien 327)

African American women writers are acting like a mouthpiece for the existing black women in America. They have tried to declare the true reality and also created the truth in their own way, which defies existing perceptions. Instead of writing for a larger audience, they have

written for themselves and all other African American women. From the beginning to the contemporary period, African-American women's contribution is shaped by their experience both as blacks and as women, an experience whose pressure they have resisted at the same time they have recognized its strategic survival value in life and exploited its symbolic power in their art.

The ensuing chapter analyses the patriarchal oppression and gender discrimination in the novel.

Chapter-2

Patriarchal Oppression and Gender Discrimination in *Meridian*

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Walker's second novel *Meridian* is about the female protagonist of the same name who is gradually awakened from her subordinate status as a black female, daughter, wife and mother to her own self and tries to become the maternal provider of the larger black community. In short, she rejects the status of biological mother and tries to become her community's mother. The novel *Meridian* showcases the triumph of the black woman as a leader. Meridian emerges as a true leader of the masses, whose ultimate motto is serving the needy black population. The novel brings into focus the invaluable contribution made by black women to the upliftment of blacks during, and after the movement. Above all, it foregrounds the contribution of black woman leadership as an essential pre-requisite for the emancipation of the black community. Walker as a youngster actively participated in the Civil Rights Movement and this semi-autobiographical novel is based on her personal life experiences.

Meridian is an important cultural novel by Alice Walker. It explains the African American Male leadership and the place of female in the Civil Rights Movement. It has a masculine agenda to neglect the women's works. This masculinity in America had certain assumptions and beliefs that considered women as a second class and of second place. It was culture of power of the black men copied from the white male power structure. Through this novel Walker has presented this masculine power culture with the help of characters, like Truman and Eddie. Meridian is deserted by Eddie after their marriage and left alone with a child. She gets involved in the Civil Rights Movement and gets sexually attracted to Truman. Truman also leaves her for a white girl, Lynne. All these events present African American male culture of power. Thus the relationships of power are main concerns of the novel. Along with the issue of male leadership, music is also an important aspect of African American culture. Alice Walker has used music as a motif in the novel. Music is a major form of African American culture. This is a music that glorifies sexist, misogynist, patriarchal way of thinking

and behaving. In the novel the church songs and music are discussed very often. This singing, at the black churches, is a cultural aspect of the black Americans. During her work as an activist in the South, Meridian Hill discovers her role in the liberation of her people from oppression.

Meridian, published in 1976, is a prose narrative presented in an episodic format dealing with the characters and events related to the Civil Rights Movement. It analyses the history of the South and the African Americans living there. Meridian Hill, one of the members of the South, is the protagonist of the novel. The novel is set in rural Georgia and narrates the events taking place at the place like Mississippi, Alabama, Atlanta's Saxon College and New York City. It deals with the Civil Rights Movement, which gained force in 1960s, demonstrations, and protests against the racist and segregationist policies. Through this novel Walker has spoken about the horrors of domestic violence, sexual abuse and racial issues. By labelling herself womanist, Walker has presented her primary goal to free woman from oppression in America. This is a journey of the protagonist from loneliness, guilt and self doubt to self-acceptance, empowerment and love. Meridian takes to establish her identity against the background of social upheaval, sexual alienation and racial suppression. Meridian Hill, Truman Held and Lynne Robinowitz are major characters of the novel. Meridian, as a protagonist of the novel, is a rural Georgian resident and a student. Her relationship with her mother casts a shadow over her life. She struggles to overcome this obstacle. *Meridian* suffers of the guilt and sadness because of her mother's emotional distance and disapproving nature. She struggles with her own understanding and dedicates herself to the movement. At the period of her teenage, she becomes pregnant and marries Eddie. She begets a baby boy and drops out of school. Her married life cannot last long, later the house, in which they live, is bombed and Meridian Hill participates in the Civil Rights Movement. In the activity she comes in contact with Truman Held, an activist, and they fall in love with each other. In this period she gets an opportunity to attend college. She rejects motherhood and all its relations and attends college.

Yet she wants to be connected to her people though the movement is over. She keeps her struggle with her philosophy of non violence.

African Americans have a diverse range of culture from different countries. They commonly share a history of slavery and racial oppression. Yet, they share a rich and unique African American culture in America. African Americans are a group of people struggling for survival and self. They have a different way of life from that of whites. The American Negroes are different from American Whites. They have their own history of slavery, distinct patterns of culture, speech, music, dance, self-expression and relationship. All these aspects of African Americans have been presented in different literary genres by almost all men and women writers. Alice Walker, an African American writer, has also presented these aspects of African American culture in her literary works. She has dealt with the racial segregation and sexism existing among African American men and women. Alice Walker, while growing up in rural Georgia praises as well as hates the South. This dual vision of the South has found place in almost all her works. She remembers that the white world of the South pays her sharecropper father three hundred dollars for a year. She writes, "The hard work, in the fields, the shabby houses, the evil greedy men who worked my father to death and almost broke the courage of that strong woman, my mother." (*Meridian* 21).

African American females are victims of sexism as they are treated as the housekeepers and consumers. The men of their families, under the influence of racism, demand that their women partners should treat them like masters and show them respect. Because of severe racial discrimination the women become the victims of violence as well as emotional and sexual abuse in the black community. In *Meridian*, Alice Walker has put forth the issue of a social revolution for racial equality in the 1960s in America. The protagonist, Meridian Hill, has a history of racism, exploitation and oppression. Meridian, as a womanist character, unknowingly gets involved in sexual relations with Eddie and becomes a mother of a baby. She

is sexually oppressed by Eddie and left alone to look after her baby. She experiences an abortion, physical trauma and physical and psychological disorientation. In the beginning, Truman supports her in the struggle of the Civil Rights Movement, but in the end his sexual behavior becomes oppressive in relation to Meridian. She is left alone once again by Truman for the reason of getting married to another woman, Lynne. She is a daughter of an African American father and mother, brought up among the conflicts of racism, patriarchy and suspicion of maternity. Though the time of slavery is gone at the time of the novel, its effects are still present as black people are treated with lower social status. The men are getting all the facilities but women are prohibited from certain rights, like education. A number of people think that women should be inferior, dependent, and submissive. Because of this view they are more victimized and exploited. According to her father it is unnecessary for women to get education. Due to this attitude and because of her pregnancy Meridian Hill, at the age of seventeen, becomes “A drop-out from high school, a deserted wife, a mother, a daughter-in-law.” (Meridian 73)

Though there is no trace of racism, sexism is in practice. Meridian becomes a victim of sexism. After she gives birth to a child, her husband leaves her and her child. People do not blame men for making their wives raise the children alone. But women are condemned and labelled a witch and a monster if they leave their children. Yet, Meridian finds a way out of all restrictions and social norms and leaves her child for caring. She starts her education and acts as a member of the Civil Rights Movement. Meridian is born in the southern town of America in a African American family with the background of slavery.

Merlin reminds the reader that the study of ancient female-centred religion is not some recent invention or a crackpot radical feminist idea and it is not necessarily accurate and objective knowledge production but a cultural practice with ideological interests. Walker wants the notion of evolutionary superiority to be, and she employs the character of Miss Lisse to do

so. The characters in this novel say Walker separated from their past to prevent themselves from becoming as a whole. The characters dissociation of history deny them to grow as a whole, and because of this, they forgot the entire creation of the world.

In the novel *Meridian*, there is a little amount of racism is traced because the racism has been eradicated by the time that the novel talks about. Yet, as far as the Civil rights Movement is concerned, there are certain events of racism those are presented by Alice Walker. When Eddie, Meridian's husband, leaves her with her child alone, she sits watching the television. It is the time of the Civil Rights Movement and a large number of black people are gathered at a house. It is a live programme broadcasted on the television. She watches, The house she had passed was on. There was to be a voter registration drive A group of young men made this announcement to a white newscaster who looked astonished Black people were never shown in the news – unless of course they had shot their mothers or raped their bosses' grandparents..... (*Meridian* 69)

This is the atmosphere of the Civil Rights Movement. It is shown in the description that the treatment given to the black is oppressive. The voice of people is suppressed. The next morning Meridian watches the early news and she finds that the house is demolished by firebombs. Walker writes, "The bombs, exploding, set fire to not just the house—the whole cluster of houses on the street. Three small children were injured – no, a flash at the bottom of the screen announced them dead; several grownups were injured. One adult, missing, was assumed dead." (*Alice Walker* 70)

The people, demonstrating and organizing a voter registration, are suppressed and segregated. By this happening she becomes aware of her past and decides to get into the movement. In the past Meridian's ancestors were slaves, therefore the history of slavery has been passed on to her. Her house is not peaceful because her father and mother have their own

frustrations. Her father is in frustration because of the loss of his land, and mother was unsatisfied with the freedom she gets from her husband. Same sort of freedom Meridian wants, but she is burdened with the responsibility of her child. She does not like the role of a mother. Therefore she becomes rebellious against it. Walker puts it rightly as, “She began to dream, each night, just before her baby sent out his cries, of ways to murder him.” (*Meridian* 65)

She has the feelings of being exploited and victimised by the rules that bring better opportunities to men than women. These views and decisions make her a womanist character. Alice Walker presents the central character, Meridian, as an activist and artist. She is lonely, physically and psychologically abused woman. She gets an opportunity to become an exception for other black women. She becomes an artist by strengthening her physique and mind with action. While at Saxon she is disappointed by her affair with Truman. She thinks about herself as a wilful and sinful girl. In the course of her stay at Saxon, Meridian learns folk stories, songs and dances. With the help of this transformation she remains the only survivor of the Civil Rights Movement. She gets a new approach to revolution. She forgets all her pains and agonies and serves her people. She listens to the old music and visits the black church very often. She writes songs and sings them. Her contribution to the movement is her memory songs those are “the songs of the people transformed by the experiences of each generation, that hold them together, and if any part of it is lost, the people suffer and are without soul.” (*Meridian* 221)

She believes in the folk heritage that will help in the process of attempting social change. She thinks that her own existence is inseparable from all black people. She writes, “There is water in the world for us brought by our friends though the rock of Mother and God vanishes into sand and we, cast out alone to heal and re-create ourselves”. (*Meridian* 236)

Meridian’s intensity and passion peep out through this. She decides to utilise her art for the survival and wholeness of her community. She forgets all her pains and guilt she committed

in the past. She writes this while telling Truman, her lover about her love for him. She is presented herself to be returned to the world cleansed of sickness. The hope of Meridian Hill shows that she believes in her community and her struggle for them has a great future. She wants to say that she is not alone, oppressed and without bearing any conflict in her soul. This discussion of Meridian, as an artist, indicates the importance and the place of art in the life of human being.

As a teen, ignorant with regards to sex, Meridian becomes pregnant, weds, and exits school to have the child kid, who causes her to feel unconcerned, best case scenario. Around the time her union with Eddie is dissolving, Meridian notification the presence of white social equality laborers in a dark area. Afterward, the house wherein they are remaining is bombarded. The occurrence spikes Meridian to chip in for the purpose. At the central command, she meets Truman. Before long they are exhibiting together and getting beaten, captured, and imprisoned. Meridian's mom dislikes Meridian's revolutionary political exercises. Out of the blue, Meridian is offered a grant to Saxon College. Her companions endeavor to persuade her mom that it is an extraordinary chance for Meridian. Surrendering Eddie Jr., Meridian beginnings school yet is tortured with the guilt that consistently hounds her.

Meridian makes an honest effort to fight dejection and conform to school life. After the Wild Child episode, she moves off grounds, effectively proceeding with her social liberties fights and showings. She likewise becomes hopelessly enamored with Truman. The two start dating, however their recently discovered ecstasy as a team is undermined by the appearance of understudies—white ladies—from the North who volunteer to help the development. Many summon a racial support or sincerely fetishize the unfamiliar, dark culture that they are completely defying interestingly. Truman is taken by one of the fresh introductions, Lynne, and the two start dating. In spite of the fact that Truman and Meridian momentarily continue sexual relations, Truman keeps on pursuing his growing relationship with Lynne. Pregnant,

Meridian has an early termination and gets her reproductive ability limited. After Lynne leaves, Truman endeavors to revive his previous love for Meridian, requesting that she have his youngsters. Meridian, accordingly, hits him with her bookbag, cutting his cheek.

With graduation drawing closer, Meridian again becomes sick, losing her sight and slipping by into obviousness. She remains in bed for a month. Miss Winters, one of Saxon's couple of dark teachers, nurture her back to wellbeing. Anne-Marion, who has additionally been next to Meridian, in the end infers that she is unequipped for adoring Meridian and betrays her companion. Truman and Lynne, presently wedded, are living in Mississippi, where her whiteness starts to imperil them and the development when an individual rights laborer, Tommy Odds, has the lower half of one of his arms shot off. Progressively, Lynne is avoided from the walks and gatherings. Notwithstanding having a girl, Camara, Truman becomes increasingly more far off from his better half. He drives to Alabama to visit Meridian. Recently fixated on his previous darling, he attempts to win her back, however Meridian scorns his advances. After the passing of Camara, Lynne visits Meridian, whose disease has progressed and guaranteed the majority of her hair. Lynne is severe over the sluggish disintegrate of her marriage and the way her once-optimistic life has ended up. She has come looking for Truman, whose visits to Meridian have become more regular.

The activity then, at that point shifts, in flashback, to Lynne's more youthful years, when she leaves her family for her new existence with Truman and the development. After the shooting, Tommy Odds assaults her. He gets back with three companions and urges them to do likewise, however they reject. Lynne, crazy, engages considerations of leaving and mentions to Truman what occurred, however he does not trust her. Tommy discloses to Truman that Lynne is with him exclusively to offer reparations for her transgressions, out of culpability for the bigotry blacks had languished over hundreds of years. Lynne and Truman become progressively far off, as Lynne at last entices or surrenders to the lewd gestures of his

companions and different men locally. Ultimately, the men tire of her and, pregnant, she moves to New York and lives on government assistance. Truman likewise moves to New York, where he turns into a craftsman. At the point when Lynne goes to his condo uptown to disclose to him that Camara has been assaulted by a man and hospitalized, she finds that he is living with a youthful light lady. After Camara kicks the bucket, Truman sends for Meridian, who shows up to comfort him and Lynne. Lynne reviews her impressions of southern Jews and the manner in which they treated her. She in the end settle she has no second thoughts for leaving her past, and its relationship with white oppressors, behind.

The last segment opens with the Atlanta burial service cortege of Martin Luther King, Jr. After eight years, Meridian battles with inquiries of radicalism and how the development eventually ended up. Truman thinks that it is simpler to let such issues be. Meridian remaining parts in her modest community, pushing for the dark inhabitants to cast a ballot and attempt to change their parcel. She reviews the time she took to routinely go to chapel gatherings. Once, an elderly person, whose extreme child had been killed while working for the development, tended to the assemblage. Meridian recovered her faltering craving to kill in the interest of the privileges of blacks. She and Truman proceed with their elector enrollment drives vigorously. Truman reveals to Lynne he cherishes her and will uphold her as a companion. Truman requests that Meridian love him as she once did. Meridian promptly states that she adores him yet that her sentiments have changed. Restored of her disease, Meridian gets ready to continue on, abandoning Truman to proceed with the work that she began in Chicokema. Perusing the verses, she has posted on the divider, Truman tumbles to the floor in a faint. After arousing, he reasons that he should take up the conflict under the surface of which Meridian has at last liberated herself.

Parenthood is the focal point of Meridian's story. Walker presents a social setting wherein parenthood turns into a vehicle for transformation for Meridian. She utilizes two

designs; Culture, Tradition and the Black society passes on the African ladies with few substitutes to the asphyxia and penance of conventional wifehood and parenthood. The internal design is the previous everyday existence of the Hill. She understands from the case of her own mom that parenthood is being covered alive, walled away from her own life, step by step. Her mom causes her to feel remorseful for “breaking her mom’s arising self” (*Meridian* 51). Her girlhood and youthful adulthood address times of passionate destitution. Meridian’s course of inception into this new obligation of parenthood, her pregnancy, came as an aggregate shock. She realized she did not need the youngster Sustaining the requirements of the kid was ‘bondage’. She wanted for opportunity and felt as however something roosted inside her mind was going to fly.

Meridian Hill, in *Meridian*, is a womanist protagonist of the novel who suffers of contemporary patriarchy. She becomes the mother of a child in early age and she has to leave her education. As a courageous and wilful woman she gives her child for upbringing and starts her struggle in the Civil Rights Movement. After certain efforts and struggle, she comes to a conclusion that she must love and respect herself as her whole life depends upon self love and self respect. She becomes isolated in the movement as it is outdated at present. But she keeps fighting against the segregation she experiences in the society. She follows the path of non violence to bring about the desired changes in the system. She also understands that one should comfort the self for the reason of survival and wholeness. Karen Stein has written about the novel, “Walker’s novel affirms that it is not by taking life that true revolution will come about, but through each individual’s slow, painful confrontation of self.” (Karen Stein 140)

Her confrontation with her personal history, family history and racial history helps her choose her way to live life. In the final section of the novel her journey from contrariness to wholeness starts. She gets strength for her struggle from the traditions of her community of the South. For the purpose of survival whole she turns toward the church. It is the church of Nat

Turner that is rooted in the soil of protest against oppression. In the church, listening to the hymns, Meridian achieves a spiritual release and transformation. She also turns to the songs and tales of her cultural heritage and finds a way to serve her community.

After suffering from illness, bitterness and confusing for long time, Meridian emerges as a strength and powerful woman. She searches for wholeness and the answers for the problem of human injustice. For the purpose of survival, Meridian rejects conventional middle class life, the traditional roles of women, such as a dutiful daughter, a wife, a mother and a lover. For this rejection she has to encounter with death and deathliness. Through these experiences she gains the knowledge and power to achieve a new sense of self. She rejects her motherhood in search of self and seeks admission in the Saxon college. She rejects her lover, Truman, and her son also. When Truman comes to her for love after a long time, she refuses him. She forgives him for the treatment he gives her by marrying another woman, Lynn. She suggests him that the grace which he searches must come from his own search for wholeness. She sets him free and she becomes free of the pain and bitterness. When Truman leaves her, she considers herself a woman used and discarded, she says to Truman, "You are free to be whichever way you like, to be with whoever, of whatever color or sex you like and what you risk in being truly yourself. The way you want to be, is not the loss of me". (*Meridian* 238)

Meridian respects Truman's freedom without any quarrel and violence. Walker also affirms that violence is not needed for any movement. Taking life of any person is not revolution but love and respect would make any movement successful. In *Meridian* the process of searching for self identity takes place without any violence. Thus search for wholeness is a continuing process without hurting others. In this relation, Barbara Christina has rightly written, "Walker invites us to use the novel as contemplative and analytical in our own individual search." (Barbara Christian 235)

This shows that an individual search is an adventure that ends in a neat resolution that leads to survival and wholeness. The survival and wholeness can be achieved through every individuals slow and painful efforts and confrontation of self. Walker then, at that point stops to zero in on the perplexing relationship of Meridian, Truman and Lynne. She investigations how sexism and prejudice work to impact person of color individual of color white lady connections. Truman weds Lynne since he needs a lady who is amazing in every one of the eyes of the world, an optimal lady, and the white lady is the nearest thing to control he can get in white America. Be that as it may, the other dark insurgency emerges, as Tommy Odds, see Lynne as a white lady and Truman experiences under the 'pressing factor of Ostracism structure the gathering' (Meridian 138).

Meridian is something of a spiritualist, withdrawing every once in a while into trancelike states from which she arises more grounded than at any other time maybe her most particular attributes is her otherworldliness. Her dismissal of realism is one more indication of her otherworldliness. At whatever point Truman visits Meridian, he finds that she has less and less assets, until she is left with just whatever she might be wearing. In the same way as other spiritualists, Meridian has an austere existence, keeping the requirements from getting her own body.

Clearly Walker accepts these sorts of changes are called for in case there is to be any genuine opportunity for American individuals, dark or white. She needs us to know, to live completely aware of our lives. The option is to keep on strolling as though stupefied or half sleeping in the standard, worn out tracks of the past. It is to keep on overwhelming futile, negative, and surprisingly damaging convictions on each other until all certifiable inclination is gone, and life in its fullest sense has no desire for being.

Against a rich embroidery woven of strings of the past and social turmoil, the individual battles of the fundamental characters are featured. Meridian is fundamentally the narrative of Meridian Hill, a touchy, otherworldly individual of color who unobtrusively battles to liberate herself from the covering weight of her own obliviousness, painful responsibility, and self-loathing. Her culpability outgrows her absence of understanding and a progression of occurrences basically connected with her mom, an unbending, irate lady who feels she has been sold out somehow or another by marriage and her kids. As a result of her mom's disposition toward her, Meridian in her blamelessness accepts she has taken something of significant worth from her mom just by being conceived. When, despite her mom's urgings, she can not force herself to join the Church, her feeling of culpability about bombing her mom again is escalated. Afterward, out of a frantic feeling of deficiency, Meridian parts with her own baby child. This demonstration further adds to her practically terrible weight of responsibility, and, what's more, makes her scorn herself. She accepts she is a deceiver, not exclusively to her mom, whom she sees as the exemplification of dark parenthood, yet to her tribal slave moms who had persevered through fantastic miseries to keep their youngsters with them.

Her associations with men, for example, they are, bring her no delight or feeling that she is adored. The men Meridian has known, including her better half whom she does not cherish and Truman whom she does, need her body yet give practically zero idea to her personally. In the long run, they all leave her. Feeling dismissed by her mom, utilized by men, and, on the grounds that she is dark, unsuitable in white society, she embarks to liberate herself from the existence that so remorselessly detains her.

The beginning of Meridian's mindfulness and ensuing opportunity accompanies her interest in the Civil Rights Movement. Before this time, Meridian had been a detached eyewitness, a significant part of the time got up to speed in dream to get away from her pathetic reality. With the rise of the Civil Rights exertion and her following sincere inclusion in it, she

starts to confront reality interestingly. Therefore, she starts to settle on decisions for herself dependent on the real world. She starts to change.

Meridian becomes hopelessly enamored with Truman Held, an attractive, vainglorious, narcissistic youthful person of color who is fairly dynamic in the development. A keen youthful craftsman, Truman is in any case from multiple points of view heartless and shallow. He can not see the confusion of his distraction with rambling French expressions while wearing African dashikis and pursuing northern white young ladies. His interest in the citizen enrollment drive is incited chiefly by his longing to be viewed as up to date, instead of by any feeling of responsibility. Bewildered by his own narcissism, he underestimates Meridian's affection for himself and neglects to fathom the genuine significance of the Civil Rights exertion. At whatever point life has all the earmarks of being coming excessively close, Truman 'get away' to New York, where the person of color is supposedly free, and where he can lose himself in his specialty, the lone existence where he is in charge.

Out of disarray and basic resentment at the shameful acts of this present reality, Truman strikes out at ladies. He regards the white lady as a lady-goddess, a substitute who has the wrongdoings of her race stored high upon her head. Her discipline at his hands is sex without adoration or sympathy. The individual of color is commended. She is praised in verse, model, and paint. She is craftsmanship, however found in this light she is not human. In this way her discipline is more guileful.

It is solely after his blustery union with Lynne, a liberal, white, working class international student from New York, and the passing of their five-year-old girl, who bites the dust as the consequence of a merciless assault, that Truman pushes toward some similarity to an adult comprehension of himself and his life. He winds up stepped back to Meridian consistently as though she were a magnet. This fascination is incompletely founded on his

attention to Meridian's disdain for him; yet more significant, he half intentionally realizes that with her assistance and an earnest association on his part in the blacks battle he can discover himself and without a doubt become a genuine man. He goes through Southern people group with Meridian seeing the individual torture in the existences of individuals there. He starts to get a handle on what getting individuals to cast a ballot truly implies. He sees them act despite mercilessness, fear, even demise to revamp their lives to improve things, to maintain their human nobility. Truman's recently discovered mindfulness makes him choose to remain in the South. With that choice comes the guarantee of another life for him.

For the entirety of its cheerfulness, *Meridian* is not a fantasy; Alice Walker comprehends human instinct excessively well for that. She realizes the intrinsic human protection from change which outgrows dread of the obscure or the misconstrued. Her original wrestles with likely the most destroying apprehension of all—the dread of confronting reality and living with it. It is this dread that overpowers Lynne. She has lost everything: Truman, her little girl, her folks, and her place in white society. Through anguishing encounters, she has taken in reality with regards to blacks and whites in America. Her optimism has been torn from her and disposed of like such a lot of junk. In any case, Lynne can not live with reality that, from her perspective, floats like destruction generally her. So she arms herself with the remaining parts of old, tired legends and dreams, for example, deciding to consider the To be and its blacks as craftsmanship: a peaceful scene with warm dim bodies against a lavish green scene. Her most dooming dream, nonetheless, is the one that uncovers her confidence in the white goddess fantasy. Lynne will not surrender her conviction that as a white lady her body has extraordinary control over people of color. She realizes that this force is decrepit and belittling, however she expects frantically to remember. She cannot surrender it regardless of whether it implies an opportunity for something better; she can not imagine something better.

Force is predominance. In case Lynne is intended to represent white society, the image holds shocking ramifications.

It is hard to identify blemishes in this rousing book. Saying this does not imply that that it is an ideal work, however just that it is so authentic in its appearance that its shortcomings, whatever they are, are enormously eclipsed by its excellence and enthusiastic force. A women's activist note can be recognized occasionally, however the note is unpretentious and valid and never damages the excellence of the original's theme.

Walker's style is effortless and lovely. In any event, when she is depicting scenes of mutilation and outrageous affliction, she does as such with outstanding affectability. She is a strongly concerned essayist, and her genuine tone mirrors this worry. Notwithstanding, there are hints of humor that oddly give the peruser some rest from the aggravation being uncovered, but simultaneously, underline that aggravation. Walker likewise utilizes parody and incongruity which she applies generously, albeit not solely, to her male characters. Her utilization of incongruity serves to call attention to our erroneous convictions about ourselves as well as other people. In her backing of progress, Walker utilizes a style that is satiric however thoughtful, wonderful and powerful, elegant yet twisting.

The title of the clever alludes to the focal person, however more than that, it focuses to the person as image. Meridian, as her name recommends, draws in and guides. The peruser is attracted to her on the grounds that there is much with regards to his own otherworldly predicament that he imparts to her; she represents the singular's battle to bode well out of his reality. As it were, Meridian is an existential courageous woman. While we might confront fairly hesitantly our own sensations of segregation, dishonor, and culpability as Meridian does, it is generally satisfying to have the option to observe her triumph over them. We share in this triumph and cheer up. Alice Walker gives us an unpleasant portrayal of creating oneself out of

time, exertion, and agony to arise victorious in the information on what one's identity is and the stuff to really live.

Women Oppression is one of the most important issues in the Novels of Alice Walker. She presents the dehumanizing and demoralizing impact of the Oppression on the African Americans in general and women in particular as women stand the most vulnerable to the racist atrocities. In her projection of the women oppression, she presents racism a stumbling block in women's liberation and emancipation for constructing the egalitarian society. She does not only present the horrifying effects of racism on women but also throws clear light on the entire racist institution that manipulates the religious, economic, social and political positions and power to terrorize the African Americans. She attacks oppression and terms it socially unjust and hazardous, politically corrupt and morally disgusting and scientifically unwarranted by projecting the African Americans who stand victims to the institutionalised oppressions in her works. The representation of the institutionalised oppression of the African Americans is a recurrent issue in Walker's novel through which she throws light on the painful experiences of the African American people and their struggles for survival to substantiate their right to equality and freedom.

Meridian is the record of an individual of color's life as it unfurls itself towards self-acknowledgment and opportunity. It analyzes how the idea of female opportunity affects Meridian, a Black Civil Rights laborer in the quickly changing social environment of the 1960s and how her mission for comprehensive character turns up at ground zero, just when she can reclassify her job which has been given over to individuals of color through custom and society. The book opens with Meridian's experience with Truman, her old confidant in the Civil Rights Movement. He notices her driving the dark offspring of the town of Chicokema to see Marilene O'Shay, a mummy of a dead white lady, furthermore, advises her: "when things are done it is ideal to leave." Meridian answered "And imagine they were never started?" (*Meridian* 27) is

the prologue to an excursion back on schedule. The creator takes advantage of a continuous flow method furthermore, goes in reverse and forward in time investigating Meridian's new past as well as her mom's past to present the topic of her growing up. Equity deferred is equity denied is by all accounts the principal topic in the book. This battle negatively affects those battling for Justice however it illuminates the reason that even the people who seem to have a reason towards which they are running after, even those political dissidents have a secret weapon. Meridian is not driven so much by plot, sub plot, topics and expressive gadgets; it is in excess of a fair record of history. It is a character driven novel depicting the feelings of dread and disappointment of its significant characters. Meridian's encounters from school to her self-deciding yet forlorn self; as a chivalrous individual who is unattached and free to adore without the weights of sex, misuse, and institutional things.

Meridian starts her excursion of self-revelation isolated and she attempts it with mental fortitude and poise. The original closures on a hopeful note. Meridian's journey in her excursion is from "young adult ignorance to self-information, from death to resurrection, from conflicts with progressive enthusiasm to an otherworldly vision." (Meridian 29) Thus, oneself has blossomed, Meridian has discovered her character, a personality molded not from Western custom, but instead from the antiquities of her own legacy. Toward the finish of the book, she gets from her companion, Anne Marion, the image of a colossal tree stump from which a minuscule branch is developing. It is from a tree, the Sojourner — an image of both the dark oral and melodic customs — planted during subjugation on an estate which later became Saxon College. Allegorically speaking, Meridian is that branch from the Sojourner. The declaration that albeit methodical endeavors have been made to annihilate the tree, the core, of dark life, is not dead. Meridian's journey for dark womanhood at long last transforms into a worry for the endurance and completeness of the whole African American community. She tracks down the genuine importance of her life in her very endeavor to change the current social framework to

serve all blacks, male and female. Meridian consequently arises as a freed individual of color with a hard-won knowledge into the questions of life. Obviously the novel makes a picture of the African-American lady with all her intricacy, variety, and profundity.

Women of the African American population are distorted even locally. Individuals of color who were mistreated and overwhelmed socially, actually and physically, attempt to get independence from the predominance. The vast majority of the people of color are treated as slaves they need to rethink their womanhood. The chief pieces of the individuals of color gave as slaves they need to free their adulthood. The oppression and camouflage of individuals of color, concealment, subjugation, sex segregation, and how they separate themselves. It investigates the investigation of people of color oppression, sex-division self-acknowledgment, arousing, and self-liberation. Alice Walker, an Afro American author, experience for the individuals of color opportunity. She asks individuals of color to perceive their connectedness to ladies who generally have fabricated scaffolds for them with their unyielding and autonomous soul. The primary contention of this paper is to beaten the sufferings of individuals of color. Walker's writings show major concern and focus on the black women and its co-existence in the American Society. This is best reflected in her interview with John O'Brien in which she states that:

I am preoccupied with the spiritual survival, the survival whole, of my people. But beyond that, I am committed to exploring the oppressions, the loyalties and triumphs of black women. For me, black women are the most fascinating creations in the world.”(John O'Brien 331)

According to man, women are beautiful and obedient and could not think on their own. As per Alice Walker's fiction, numerous ladies are on the whole insensible of affection, never having been permitted to share their sentiments. Moreover they do not know to celebrate the

value of self which has been violated. The black women are suppressed in many aspects; women of the black community are misrepresented even in their community. Black women who were oppressed and dominated socially, physically and sexually, try to get freedom from the dominance. Most of the black women are treated as slaves they want to redefine their womanhood. The principal parts of the black women bestowed as slaves they need to emancipate their adulthood. Oppression is based on racism and sexism of African American women. It was described as a theory, which was developed by the black social activist Claudia Jones. Christian Marie Sierra, professor of political science, blames for women's inequality. She claims, class, race and gender inequalities permeate institutions of higher learning. The power of academia rests upon the control or monitoring of ideas and its hierarchical, elitist structure which promote rich over poor and working-class whites over people of colour and men over women'. Tashi, the young African woman who appears briefly in *The Color Purple* as Celie's daughter-in-law and Adam's wife, gets a novel of her own in *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. Her story traces individual and cultural motivations for female 'circumcision' in Africa and systematically charts the harmful effects of that practice upon women, children, and ultimately society as a whole. Told through the multiple voices of Tashi and members of her family, as well as those of the anthropologist Pierre and the psychotherapists Jung and Raye, the story begins with Tashi's African childhood and ends with her death. She is executed at the hands of the post-colonial government in her country of birth, for murdering M'Lissa, the woman who circumcised her and her sister Dura, who bled to death after the operation. Walker states that this novel is not a sequel to either *The Color Purple* or *The Temple of My Familiar* in the strict sense; she has used poetic license to deviate from the earlier novels in order to tell Tashi's story as she saw fit, selecting only what she needed to write about 'female genital mutilation' as Walker insists on calling it.

Meridian realizes that in order to retain her wholeness she must rise above bodily claims. Abortion and sterilization symbolize her anger and frustration against Truman, pregnancy and motherhood. It is a metaphor for rooting out sexual weakness because Meridian wants to meet Truman at an equal level. It is a key event that pushes Meridian forward to act on her own. In fact, Meridian's 'pilgrimage' cannot be complete until she transcends sexual, maternal and racial categories through her participation in the revolution and her commitment to 're-create' the world where black children may thrive without thorns of guilt.

The upcoming chapter focuses on the concept of sexuality and sexual identity of Black Women, defined by Alice Walker in her novel *The Color Purple*.

Chapter-3

Sexuality in *The Color Purple*

Sexuality in *The Color Purple*

In *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker illustrates the abuse, neglect, and oppression of a black woman who had to go through in the early twentieth century, but she also illustrates how a woman must fight back to regain the self-esteem and confidence lost way back in the early adolescent years. It is a story about growth, endurance, and fight, all cultivated by love.

The Color Purple is one of the first novels that deals in detail with the oppression of African-American women. On the one hand it has been the first book by a female African-American writer that received the Pulitzer Prize for fiction and has until today been part of the canon of the African-American women's literature, but on the other hand it also has been criticized for the negative portrayal of men. The two occurring forms of female oppression, sexism and racism, by the main characters of the novel.

Women all over the world face many challenges and struggles that make their lives miserable and unbearable. While some women stand up for themselves and become content with themselves, others feel ashamed of who they are. In *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, the protagonist, Celie, gets described by her husband, Albert, her stepfather, Alphonso, and her husband's ex-girlfriend, Shug, as ugly. However, Celie's sister, Nettie, gives her the love she needs and makes her believe that she is beautiful even after they get separated by Albert for thirty years. In this novel, the main character, Celie, manages to break the chains of oppression and love herself even though many people try to control her and use her. Alice Walker in the novel *The Color Purple* uses theme to show that standing up for yourself can help you gain confidence and become content with yourself.

The novel opens with an initial letter where one finds that Celie, the vital person, was brutally assaulted by her dad. A particularly intense beginning tells that Celie's reality is

everything except common. The sanctity of the nuclear family is so critical to the American lifestyle, is annihilated. The stunning subtleties of assault as Celie composes, are miserable however a genuine ordinary event. Celie comprehends that as a dark woman she is viewed as useless, having a unimportant presence. There is no alternate lifestyle. Maybe all people of color are oppressed to the regular damnation of double-dealing, fanaticism, and misuse. The female characters are formed from torment and self-punishment. As the original advances, the peruser will follow Celie as she presented to a single man with four children.

The Color Purple is definitely not a conventional artistic work zeroing in on the African-American experience. Mr. and, Celie do not address the typical neediness stricken dark scholarly characters. They are individuals from the juvenile dark working class that was available when the new century rolled over. Mr. is an agreeable rancher with a high yellow mulatto father who has cash to spend. Likewise, Celie's experience is positively working class too. Walker insinuates the reality inside the clever that Celie's normal dad was a financial specialist—he began the store that Celie ultimately acquired (which was the motivation behind why he was lynched. Insights show that a greater part of those Blacks lynched in the South between the late nineteenth Century and mid-Twentieth Century were business visionaries).

Celie's voice is the voice of the hushed working class Black lady, caught inside the bounds of Black man centric force. The issue that Walker is attempting to address inside the book is an intense one. What's more, that is the entirely negative impact that man controlled society has had upon the Black people group. Man controlled society is devilish, and the harm that happens as a result of it very well may be found in the manners by which it influences all inside the book- - Celie, Shug, M. Sophia, and Harpo-and the remainder.

The sexual experience divided among Celie and Shug is perfectly time feted so that it is generally appealing to the peruser. The nuance with which Walker advances the normal

movement and the profundity and warmth of their relationship is completely charming. One of the most beautiful parts of this novel is the manner by which we as perusers can watch as the characters inside it develop and form into all the more completely entire and weak creatures. This is particularly the situation with Mr., who, as a definitive image of man-controlled society and the wrongs inside it, before the end of the book has learned, through the mileage old enough and experience, to be a kinder, gentler soul and to identify with others, particularly ladies, with modesty and with his mankind uncovered. Occurring generally in country Georgia, the story centers around female African American life during the 1930s in the Southern United States, addressing the various issues in the dark female life, including their exceedingly low situation in American social culture.

Celie, the hero and storyteller of *The Color Purple*, is a poor, uninformed, fourteen-year-old person of color living in country Georgia. Celie begins composing letters to God since her dad, Alphonso, beats and assaults her. Alphonso has effectively impregnated Celie once. Celie brought forth a young lady, whom her dad took and probably killed in the forest. Celie has a subsequent kid, a kid, whom her dad likewise takes. Celie's mom turns out to be genuinely sick and bites the dust. Alphonso gets back another spouse yet keeps on mishandling Celie.

Celie and her brilliant, pretty more youthful sister, Nettie, discover that a man referred to just as Mr. needs to wed Nettie. Mr. has a darling named Shug A very, a hot parlour vocalist whose photo interests Celie. Alphonso did not allow Nettie to wed, and on second thought offers Mr. the 'terrible' Celie as a lady. Mr. in the end acknowledges the deal, and brings Celie into a troublesome and dreary wedded life. Nettie flees from Alphonso and takes shelter at Celie's home. Mr. still longings Nettie, and when he propels on her she escapes for her own wellbeing. Never hearing from Nettie again, Celie expects she is dead.

Mr.'s sister Kate feels frustrated about Celie, and advises her to retaliate against Mr. as opposed to submit to his maltreatments. Harpo, Mr.'s child, goes gaga for an enormous, feisty young lady named Sofia. Shug Avery comes to town to sing at a neighborhood bar, however Celie is not permitted to go see her. Sofia becomes pregnant and weds Harpo. Celie is flabbergasted by Sofia's resistance despite Harpo's and Mr.'s endeavors to regard Sofia as a second rate. Harpo's endeavors to beat Sofia into accommodation reliably come up short, as Sofia is by a long shot the genuinely more grounded of the two.

Shug becomes sick and Mr. brings her into his home. Shug is at first discourteous to Celie, yet the two ladies become companions as Celie assumes liability for nursing Shug. Celie ends up captivated by Shug and drawn to her physically. Baffled with Harpo's reliable endeavors to subordinate her, Sofia moves out, taking her youngsters. A while later, Harpo opens a juke joint where Shug sings daily. Celie develops befuddled over her inclinations toward Shug.

Shug chooses to remain when she discovers that Mr. beats Celie when Shug is away. Shug and Celie's relationship develops private, and Shug starts to ask Celie inquiries about sex. Sofia returns for a little while and instantly gets in a battle with Harpo's new sweetheart, Squeak. Around one day, the civic chairman's significant other, Miss Millie, requests that Sofia fill in as her house cleaner. Sofia replies with a cheeky 'Damnation no.' When the city hall leader slaps Sofia for her resistance, she returns the blow, wrecking the chairman. Sofia is shipped off prison. Squeak's endeavors to get Sofia liberated are useless. Sofia is condemned to labor for a very long time as the civic chairman's servant.

Shug gets back with another spouse, Grady. Notwithstanding her marriage, Shug prompts a sexual relationship with Celie, and the two oftentimes share a similar bed. One night Shug gets some information about her sister. Celie expects Nettie is dead since she had vowed

to keep in touch with Celie yet never did. Shug says she has seen Mr. stow away various strange letters that have shown up via the post office. Shug figures out how to get her hands on one of these letters, and they discover it is from Nettie. Looking through Mr.'s trunk, Celie and Shug discover many letters that Nettie has shipped off Celie throughout the long term. Defeat with feeling, Celie peruses the letters all together, considering how to hold herself back from killing Mr.

The letters show that Nettie got to know a preacher couple, Samuel and Corrine, and went with them to Africa to accomplish service work. Samuel and Corrine have two taken on youngsters, Olivia and Adam. Nettie and Corrine become dear companions, however Corrine, seeing that her took on kids take after Nettie, contemplates whether Nettie and Samuel have confidential past. Progressively dubious, Corrine attempts to restrict Nettie's job inside her family.

Nettie becomes frustrated with her minister insight, as she discovers the Africans egotistical and stubborn. Corrine turns out to be sick with a fever. Nettie requests that Samuel disclose to her how he took on Olivia and Adam. In light of Samuel's story, Nettie understands that the two youngsters are really Celie's organic kids, alive all things considered. Nettie additionally discovers that Alphonso is truly just Nettie and Celie's progression father, not their genuine dad. Their genuine dad was a storekeeper whom white men lynched in light of the fact that they despised his prosperity. Alphonso told Celie and Nettie he was their genuine dad since he needed to acquire the house and property that was once their mom's.

Nettie admits to Samuel and Corrine that she is indeed their kids natural auntie. The seriously sick Corrine will not trust Nettie. Corrine bites the dust, yet acknowledges Nettie's story and feels accommodated not long before her passing. In the acting, Celie visits Alphonso, who - affirms Nettie's story, conceding that he is just the ladies stepfather. Celie starts to lose

a portion of her confidence in God, however Shug attempts to get her to reconsider God in her own particular manner, instead of in the customary picture of the old, hairy white man.

The city hall leader discharges Sofia from her bondage a half year early. At supper one evening, Celie at last delivers her repressed fury, irately reviling Mr. for his long stretches of misuse. Shug declares that she and Celie are moving to Tennessee, and Squeak chooses to go with them. In Tennessee, Celie invests her energy planning and sewing separately customized sets of jeans, at last transforming her pastime into a business. Celie gets back to Georgia for a little while, and finds that Mr. has improved his methodologies and that Alphonso has kicked the bucket. Alphonso's home and land are currently hers, so she moves there. In the mean time, Nettie and Samuel wed and get ready to get back to America. Before they leave, Samuel's child, Adam, weds Tashi, a local African young lady. Following African custom, Tashi goes through the excruciating ceremonies of female circumcision and facial scarring. In fortitude, Adam goes through a similar facial scarring custom.

Celie and Mr. accommodate and start to really appreciate each others conversation. Presently autonomous monetarily, profoundly, and inwardly, Celie is as of now not irritated by Shug's passing excursions with more youthful men. Sofia remarries Harpo and presently works in Celie's clothing store. Nettie at long last re-visitations of America with Samuel and the youngsters. Genuinely depleted however elated by the get-together with her sister, Celie takes note of that however she and Nettie are presently old, she has at no point ever felt more youthful.

The author does not reveal to us everything about the characters, the setting, and why the characters act the manner in which they do. The novel is written in a progression of letters, not dated. There are huge holes between certain letters, yet this is not uncovered by the creator;

we need to sort it out ourselves. The letters are written in what Walker calls dark society language, which additionally diminishes the effortlessness of the perusing.

At the point when the clever opens, Celie is a youthful person of color living in Georgia in the early long periods of the 20th century. She is a uninformed young lady, and keeps in touch with her letters in a typical language. Celie is entering her puberty accepting she was assaulted by her dad and that he killed both of their youngsters. She keeps in touch with God, since she has nobody else to write to. She feels that what befell her is awful to the point that she can just discuss it to somebody she feels adores her. She knows her sister Nettie loves her, yet she is too youthful to even think about comprehension. Celie accepts just to God may she talk genuinely and straightforwardly about her suffering.

Celie is not, not withstanding, now, whining to God, she is basically trusting in him. Celie was naturally introduced to a helpless family; her mom was wiped out more often than not, intellectually and truly; there were such a large number of kids in the family; and Celie was mishandled by the man she accepted was her dad. Celie feels objectified and manhandled however fail to see why. Such countless terrible things have happened to Celie that she needs confidence and certainty. Celie does not feel she is adequately worth to sign her name toward the finish of the letters.

Gradually, Celie advances into an adult lady with extraordinary certainty, however not before her sister Nettie is detracted from her, and she weds a barbarous man who truly needed to wed Nettie. For quite a while, Celie is just about a captive to her better half, until her significant others special lady comes to live with them to recover from infection, and Celie turns into her medical caretaker.

Shug is a resilient lady and urges Celie to develop further. Simultaneously, Sofia and Celie's little girl in-law, shows Celie to go to bat for herself and battle bias and bad form, and

battle. Before the finish of the novel, Celie's new strength pays off, on the grounds that she can live joyfully with her loved ones. She reunites with Nettie and her two youngsters, who have been raised by Nettie. Celie figured out how to battle, to defend herself, and she was compensated. Celie had the option to endure actually and profoundly and can develop into a full, present day 20th century lady.

The body is fundamental to a person and abuse on the body removes personhood in the same way categorization systems do. The trauma the women experience is directly linked to the type of oppression and violence they suffer. Celie's suffering does not end once she is given to Mr. Celie, like Sofia and Squeak, is victim to brutal physical and sexual abuse throughout her life because of the categories she belongs to. Mitchell offers an explanation to the women's cyclically oppressed existence stating, "gendered subjectivity can be seen as constituted ideologically, ensuring the continual reproduction of dominant masculinity and dominated femininity"(Jackson 9).

The women in Walker's novel have found themselves in a lifetime of abuse. Sofia, who acts as one of the novel's stronger characters, offers an explanation as to why she learned how to fight; using her personal childhood experiences, she expresses the dangers that come for women living in a world run by oppressive men. Walker's glimpse into Sofia's childhood highlights the cycle of abuse women face, while providing explicit evidence to support how a woman's inferior status promotes trauma. Celie's continued abuse and discrimination throughout her childhood and adult life also illuminate the universality and commonality of gender and race associated oppression. Her abusive father gives Celie away to an abusive husband, Mr. which extends the trauma from her childhood to adulthood. Celie explains, "Most times mens look pretty much alike to me" (TCP 15). She is in an endless cycle of abuse at the hands of men, a result of her subordinate identity. Celie calls her husband, Albert, Mr. Neglecting to write Albert's name points to the reality that this could be any abusive man; the

gender and racial abuse is not confined to Celie's specific situation, but is instead a constructed categorical issue at large (Brogan). By omitting Albert's name, Celie also indicates her fear of men. Her fear of men is warranted given the abuse she was exposed to as a child. As a child, she was conditioned not to speak out against her abuse, behavior that transitioned into adulthood. Celie recounts Mr. raping her and "But I don't cry. I lay there thinking about Nettie while he lay on top of me, wondering if she safe" (TCP 12). She continues to explain: "I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive" (TCP 17). For years the abuse is so severe that Celie cannot fight back without risking her life; her identity has forced her into life or death situations and Walker uses graphic abuse scenes to better depict the implications of her gender and race. Walker's abuse scenes emphasize both men's control over women and White's control over African Americans. Overtime, Celie is repeatedly raped by Mr.confessing, "Once he git on top of me I think bout how that's where he always want to be" (TCP 65). Walker focuses on detail, while describing the abuse to call attention to the reason behind the trauma; she calls attention to a man's desire to 'be on top' in regards to their relationships and dynamic with women—a classic power struggle.

As African American women, Celie, Sofia, and Squeak will never be 'on top'; society places individuals occupying multiple 'Not-A' categories on the bottom of the totem pole. Crenshaw remarks, many women of color for example, are burdened by poverty, childcare responsibilities, and the lack of job skills—factors that maintain their subordination . Burdens of poverty, childcare responsibility, and lack of job skills are characteristic of Walker's female characters, which speaks to their confinement in roles that are inferior to their male and or White counterparts. Crenshaw's assertion points to Celie, Sofia, and Squeak's vulnerability to identity-based oppression, violence, and trauma. Walker's abuse scenes depict how a woman's gender and race put her at a greater risk of suffering traumatic events. Walker's male characters, who pride themselves on keeping women below them, obviously promote oppression and

discrimination, highlighting how gender and race cause the infliction of abuse and trauma. Harpo is symbolic of how gender and racial stereotypes are maintained over multiple generations. He demonstrates how patriarchal society passes down gender and race derived expectations to their sons, sustaining the cycle of discrimination, oppression, and abuse. Harpo very clearly defines how gender and race are the underlying causes of the trauma the women experience in *The Color Purple*.

Harpo often references his father, Mr., and his 'women handling' skills when commenting on the 'proper' way to treat women. Harpo asserts: "Women work. I'm a man" (TCP 21). Harpo's statement demonstrates the larger issue at hand: he is a representation of society's view on women's worth and potential. He illustrates the way in which oppression is distilled in the generations of men to come. Harpo learns a woman's worth and potential from the standards society and his father set for young boys to uphold. He claims: "Wives is like children. You have to let 'em know who got the upper hand. Nothing can do that better than a good sound beating" (TCP 35). Harpo explicitly says that men feel they have the upper hand over women, proving differences in gender to be a clear incentive for physical and sexual abuse. Women are not viewed as human, but instead as an object willing to jump at a man's beck and call. Harpo continues to offer 'justification' for the oppression and abuse of women when his wife, Sofia, tries to hold her mother's casket at her funeral, declaring: "But peoples use to men doing this sort of thing. Women weaker, he say. People think they weaker, say they weaker, anyhow. Women spouse to take it easy. Cry if you want. Not try to take over" (TCP 217). Walker uses Harpo's clouded view of women to prove gender, along with race, as one of the contributing factors of the trauma the women experience in the novel. In illustrating how a woman's race plays a hand in her oppression and suffering, Walker introduces the mayor and his wife, Miss Millie, who through their interactions with Sofia, spell out the crux of the trauma. Sofia at first acts as a foil to Celie. Never allowing Harpo to beat her, Sofia does not 'mind'

until she is arrested for talking back to Miss Millie and pushing the mayor down. Miss Millie saw Sofia in town and exclaimed, “All your children so clean, she say, would you like to work for me, be my maid” (TCP 85). She responds ‘hell no’ and follows by pushing the mayor down for slapping her .

The mayor and his wife symbolize racial limitations for African American women in early 20th century America. Despite Sofia’s ‘clean’ appearance, fine looking children and nice wristwatch, her identity as an African American woman dictates her potential; she is seen as capable of only being a White family’s maid. Miss Eleanor Jane, who is the White child Sofia raises as a maid, further proves the rigid gender and racial roles African American women are expected to uphold: “All the other colored women I know love children. The way you feel is something unnatural” (TCP 265). Society deems African American women ‘unnatural’ if they do not conform to their gender and race specific roles. Sofia’s master status does not provide her with equal opportunities to White women, African American men, or White men. Her gender and race trap her in a small bubble that contains minimal opportunity yet a great deal of oppression and abuse. Despite her tough attitude, Sofia is knocked down each time she tries to function outside of her master status, showing how society’s categories of difference promote oppression and trauma. Sofia is thrown in jail and Harpo finds a new girl, Squeak, who fits the ‘obedient woman’ stereotype he praises. Squeak’s real name is Mary Agnes; she received her nickname because of her passivity. She is described as a “little yellowish girlfriend” who will “do anything Harpo say” (TCP 82). Sofia adopts a similar complacency while in jail. Sofia explains, “Every time they ask me to do something, Miss Celie, I act like you” (TCP 88). Like Celie, Sofia’s spirit has been broken; she does as she is told, and as a result, internalizes how society views her. Sofia’s life in prison is symbolic of African American women’s lives; they are prisoners in their own body and a prisoner to society’s gender and race constraints. Sofia faces extreme adversity while in jail and in an effort to break

her out of prison, Celie and her family dress Squeak up “like she a white woman” because she is “the warden’s black kinfolks” (TCP 92-93). Squeak’s efforts to convince the White male warden to release Sofia fails as she reveals, “He took my hat off...Told me to undo my dress” (TCP 96). The White warden rapes Squeak because of her inferior status. The warden defends his behavior by claiming that Squeak could not have been kin to him. She admits: “He say if he was my uncle he would not do it to me. That be a sin. But this was just a little fornication. Everybody guilty of that” (TCP 96).

Walker’s novel as a whole, but specifically her female characters experiences, illustrates how race, alongside gender, is a huge factor in extending the abuse and traumatization of women. While the broad terms of gender and race can be unpacked to reveal discrimination fixed in each category alone, Walker’s novel illuminates the specific trauma that emerges when the two minority categories are combined. While working for the mayor’s wife, Sofia portrays the group specific adversity African American women endure opposed to members occupying other categories. Sofia is barred from seeing all but one of her children, going five years without even a single visit. While cleaning their house Sofia exclaims, “I’m slaving away cleaning that big post they got down at the bottom of the stair” (TCP 102). Sofia’s son says, “Don’t say slaving, Mama” (TCP 103). Sofia angrily exposes the harsh oppression, discrimination, and trauma forced upon her because of her position in society, a source of her gender and race. She declares:

“Why not? They got me in a little storeroom up under the house, hardly bigger than Odessa’s porch, and just about as warm in the winter time. I’m at the beck and call all night and all day. They won’t let me see my children. They won’t let me see no mens. Well, after five years they let me see you once a year. I’m a slave, she say. What would you call it? A captive, he say”. (TCP 103)

Sofia's experiences epitomize trauma stemming from gender and race. As an African American woman, she is confined to 'slaving' for a White family in a female specific role. Walker uses Sofia's encounter with the mayor and Miss Millie to shake the reader into understanding the driving force behind her suffering. Like Celie and Squeak, Sofia's gender and race corner her into a life of oppression and discrimination, which ultimately induces her trauma.

Celie is an innocent woman. She loves her mother very much despite her cursing her every time. Celie is very much worried about her mother's ailing health. She sexually offers herself to Pa so that her mother's health may improve. The novel begins with the sentence, "You better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy" (TCP 3). She feels very sorry for her mother. Though she died while cursing her, Celie has still all regards and respect for her mother. Celie says, "My mama cuss me you think I kept mad at her. But I ain't. I felt sorry for mama" (TCP 7). Another glimpse of solidarity can be seen between Celie and her sisters-in-law. Mr.'s two sisters visit his home and highly praise Celie for her cleanliness. They admire Celie as she takes care of the children well and cooks good food. One of Mr.'s sisters, Kate visits again and advises Mr. to bring Celie some clothes. Consequently, he took her to a store and bought her some clothes. She feels happy after receiving the dress. She wishes to thank Kate and gets "hot in the face and stutter" (TCP 21). Kate tells her that she deserves much more than this for her kind behaviour and smart maintenance of the house. Kate says, "It's all right, Celie. You deserve more than this" (TCP 22). She instructs Harpo to help Celie in bringing water. Mr. rebukes her and she leaves the house. Before leaving her brother's house, she advises Celie, "You got to fight them, Celie . . . I can't do it for you. You got to fight them for yourself" (Walker TCP 22). One more example of solidarity is seen between Sofia and Squeak. Sofia is jailed. Squeak and Harpo's other wife takes care of Sofia's children in her absence. Shug, Celie, and Harpo go to visit her in prison. Sofia tells Harpo to thank Squeak

and Odessa, Sofia's sister, as they are taking care of her children. Squeak decides to bring Sofia out of the prison. She comes to know that the prison warden, Mr Hodges is her uncle. She goes to him with a plea to help release Sofia from jail, but is in turn raped by this man.

The warden does not turn to be her uncle. There is solidarity even between Sofia and the white woman, Miss Millie. Sofia works at the Mayor's house. She teaches Miss Millie, the mayor's wife, how to drive. Miss Millie takes Sofia to her home at Christmas in her car so that she could meet her children that day. Sofia does not stay there long and leaves very shortly as she does not wish to leave Miss Millie all alone on the road. Eleanor Jane, the mayor's daughter loves Sofia very much. She is much attached to her. She often comes to see Sofia even after her marriage. She comes to work for Sofia despite being a white girl. Sofia too respects her feelings. Another good example of female solidarity can be seen between Shug and Squeak. Squeak too loves singing. Shug persuades her to sing in public. She encourages her to sing with her at the Harpo's juke joint. Shug says, "Let's go, sing one night at Harpo place. Be like old times for me" (TCP 105). Squeak gets very happy.

Shug then decides to take Squeak with her to Memphis so that she can sing in public there and get some popularity. Sofia assures Squeak that she will take care of her daughter Suzie. Squeak leaves and thanks Sofia. Corrine and Nettie also develop a good bonding. In Africa, Corrine buys Nettie some clothes "woman's boater with a checkered band" (TCP 120). Corrine suspects that Nettie is in a relationship with Samuel as the children closely look like her. Nettie tries her level best to make her understand that she does not have any relation with him. She makes her remember the day she met Celie at a store and tells her that she is only aunt to the children. In the end, all the doubts of Corrine are cleared and she dies peacefully. Olivia and Tashi develop deep friendship. Tashi is an African girl. She is not allowed to attend school as education of girls is prohibited in Africa. However, Olivia at Nettie's hut secretly

teaches her everything she learns after Tashi finishes the household chores assigned to her by her mother.

In Olivia's company, Tashi is getting enlightened, 'quiet' and 'thoughtful'. Nettie teaches both Olivia and Tashi and makes them narrate stories. Tashi's father dies. After her father's death, her mother, Catherine allows her to study as she is highly persuaded by Nettie for this pious cause. They continue their friendship as Tashi marries Adam later on. Female characters in the novel have successfully managed to maintain and nurture solidarity, sisterhood, and bonding. Through solidarity, the women in the novel are able to reach an optimal and desirable level of existence and self-realization.

Alice Walker has been a proponent of feminism and Blacks Lives Matter activist for most of her life. Her novels often touch on the oppression suffered by African Americans. However, her novels also illustrate the troubles faced by other marginalized groups such as women and LGBT peoples. In this, one can realise how Walker tackles these themes in her writing to create a more inclusive perspective on social justice. In her novels, Walker often describes oppressive forms of patriarchy through the lens of slavery. Women are often described as being owned by their fathers or husbands, which can be found in *The Color Purple*.

There are also passages in these novels that depict how women were considered to be property. For example, in *The Color Purple*, Walker writes that "A real man is gentle with his women folk" (TCP105). This line reveals both gender stereotypes and provides insight into patriarchal control over women's bodies. Similarly in *The Temple of My Familiar* when the narrator speaks about how much she loves her husband without reservation because he owns her body.

Walker also weaves in intertextuality in her novels to illustrate the plight of women and how patriarchal oppression overshadows everything else. *The Color Purple* contains a passage

where Celie writes about how her husband beat her, but she did not tell him that because he had told her “that if I didn't love him no more, why, I was the one who'd have to leave” (TCP 76). This is a common trope used in literary works which is often used to trick women into staying in abusive relationships. Walker portrays this oppressive relationship through various forms such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. In *The Color Purple*, Celie writes about her husband's extreme cruelty.

The Color Purple (1982) is the reason behind her fame as it made her the first African-American woman to have been awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1983. After its publication, Walker became an internationally acclaimed and renowned writer and the work also earned her The American Book Award in the same year. She explores the theme of oppression sexual, racist, and political which African-American women face. The novel introduces the theme of selfhood of Celie and her becoming a strong and independent woman with the help of other women in her society. The epistolary novel spans thirty years in Celie's life, a poor Southern African-American woman victimized by men and her society who became a victim of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. She writes letters to God and Nettie, her sister. With the help of Shug Avery, she discovers her inner self, esteem, and courage. At the end of the novel, she is reunited with her sister and children.

Walker emphasizes that identity formation is predicated on the ability to express one's thoughts and feelings. Silence, by contrast, erodes the self and stifles all possibilities of self-realisation. This could imply that human consciousness takes shape through language. The thinking subject is the conscious being, alive to his environment and alert to its challenges. Alice Walker blends a number of historical and cultural data into her work, and derives material from both personal and communal sources. However, as someone who lived through some of the most tempestuous times American history, the line of distinction between her own experiences and those of the community bet blurred. Her determination to relate the history of

her people, particularly the accomplishments and impediments of black women is shaped by two major experiences: the fact that she was born into the Jim Crow-era and because she was active in the civil rights and feminist movements. Slavery as an institution was an integral to economic and social life of America, particularly the South.

The force of narration in *The Color Purple*, just like the narration in Nancy Prince's narration, was gained from her position at once inside and outside the society she wished to examine. In the case of Nancy strong, her narrative voice gains credibility by her projection of herself as the true practitioner of Christian principles and as the true subscriber of protestant work ethics. This makes her a critical insider. In the case of *The Color Purple*, the authenticity in Celie's account accrues from the fact that she is both an insider and yet forced on the fringe by years of abuse and exploitation. In the story, she comes across as three different individuals: victim, witness and the reporter. She is a victim of her circumstances. Yet, she has an untiring desire to rise above her condition by reporting and narrating her ordeal.

Life and writing appear perfect synonyms of each other. Writing provided them access to an audience which was sympathetic and recognises their voices. In the context of civil rights movement in America, this becomes a cultural form which women across racial lines sympathised with. These slave narratives garnered the respectability and encouragement from the abolitionist. The accounts, at the same time, were deeply religious and conservative. Walker takes the religiosity to another level. In the preface to the tenth anniversary edition of the novel, Walker writes that whatever *The Color Purple* has been taken for during the swift ten years since its publication, it remains for her a theological work. God is an important character in the book as the majority of the ninety-one letters are addressed to him. Communication with God had sustained her through the dark and incomprehensible part of her life.

A novel which seeks to celebrate the exploits of the poor barely literate girl Celie, language should not become a burden. Because the novel essays Celie's attempts are overcoming all the obstacles to her speech and narration, Walker wants to ensure that the language of the novel should not be a barrier for her. The decision to let the novel appear primarily in a dialect is both literal and philosophical. At the literal level, it aids realism and makes the mimesis believable. As every character speaks in accordance with his/her linguistic ability, the readers find it extremely plausible. Walker's decision not to polish these sentences and present them just the way they are is an important strategy. *The Color Purple* is written primarily in dialect, which varies according to the educational level of the person writing. Since Celie's voice dominates the book, the story is told mostly in her rural Georgia dialect. This is contrasted with the educated and religious idiom of Nettie. Celie's language is no match for Shug's transcendent appreciation of nature and her capacity to philosophise. At another level, the decision to let Celie speak in her language is remarkable. The message that Walker intends to send out is this, no matter what you are or which language you speak or whatever is your competence in that language, you must speak and write. It is only in the act of speaking and writing that we can realise our true selves.

The main characters in Walker's novel are from countryside. This was a commonplace for the people from the South in the 1930s. Around this decade, nearly two thirds of the Americans were living in villages. For a village dweller, car was a great sign of luxury and progress. Even though the first cars were produced as early as the 1890s it was not until the 1920s that the car production increased. This boom in the car manufacturing was due to Henry Ford's assembly line. A picture of Shug in which she poses atop a car was one of the reasons why Celie instantly falls in love with Shug. The image of a glamorous girl atop a car becomes one of the enduring images of women's empowerment in the novel and is used as a motif

throughout the novel. In *The Color Purple* the car is introduced for the first time through the Mayor's wife. Owning the car was one thing and knowing how to drive quite another.

The discrimination and the disparity differ from that of the other world women. They are under domination physically and mentally undergoing depression and pain due to their suppressed state. The American white women are liberalised to some extent in the spheres of education, workplace, law, and so on, which is achieved due to the uprising of the feminist movement. The American society seems to be a fairyland and women dwellers as fairies for the other world women, which inspires and instigates their 'self' in their illusionary world. The white women, as the other world women, are also under domination, but it is not brought to light adequately. Due to the assimilated nature, they seem to be superiors to other world women and this is a mirage. The revolution, which is undertaken by the feminist movement, had the prime concern on granting the basic rights to women. The ratio of liberation differs with that of the other world women for it is a developed nation and remained a role model for other nations with the advancement of technologies. Even though the discrimination of white women in the American society does not occur with racial or caste like factors, it transpires with class, social, and fastidiously gender. Gender bias is a global issue giving disparity in degrees. This bigotry goes beyond culture, and women are curbed instructing all the 'isms' of the male dominated society as culture.

The dominated spirit of the patriarchal society is merged in their blood, as they want to suppress and oppress women's community. Men assume that women are created for them to be caretaker, labourer, executioner, entertainer, and so on. Importance is not given to women whichever geographical place they belong to. Women do not have the rights to let out their voice but simply to proceed with family or society. Usually, appearances are deceptive and one should not go by the way, the white women dress. Dressing does not portray them as enjoying full freedom. It is their culture and they follow it. They dress according to their environment.

It is quite a different thing and it should not be coupled with liberty. It cannot be judged blindly that they got the full freedom of education too. As the white people's native language and mother tongue is English, they are well versed in that as the other world women do have in their mother tongue. So, women living there cannot be judged by their way of dressing or mode of communication. Women are considered, if they satisfy the criteria fixed by the male society. But, they will be thrown out after being utilised. So, the freedom of women cannot be seen. In addition, the ratio only differs in the other geographical places. The dominated society remains in armed chains with restrictions of motion. Justification and substantiation for domination is given by three-fourth of the patriarchal society by creating a mirage. Women live in a world of illusions and fantasies. They still believe that a day will come to them to be in an equalised society. But, to some extent, their hopes remain vain. Women are addressed and recognised in the society by giving the title of their male counterparts. After marriage, the identity and name of women change diplomatically. Female children are under the control of their father until marriage. Then, they come under the clutches of their partner and in old age are bonded to their sons. Therefore, in one way or another, women have to be bonded and they have to pay attention to the hierarchal order of men.

Women have to lose their real 'self' for the sake of men in their home. The partial importance given to women is based on the financial status or outer charm and not on their intelligence; for it is not considered as a quality for their claim. It is a fake one and it should not be allowed to continue for a long term. Even in the society, women are not given much importance and are not preferred. In societal as well as political field, they are not considered and allowed to shine of. Even in the media, women are exposed as an object of pleasure and entertainment. Therefore, it is clear that whichever geographical place women live, they are not considered as a soul with flesh and blood wrapped with feelings.

Although, Celie faces many struggles and adversities, she overcomes the obstacles. And even though, the people in her life describe her as ugly and stupid and make her lose confidence, she manages to stand up for herself, believe in herself and become content with herself. One of the most important themes that is strongly supported in *The Color Purple* novel by Alice Walker is that being content with yourself can make your life cheerful, joyful and may as well allow you to achieve your goals and become successful.

The concluding chapter lists out the findings of the study of ‘A critical study of women oppression in Alice Walker’s select novel’.

Conclusion

Women constitute half of the human population, yet they are not treated at par with men in the world. They are pushed to the limits of oppression, suppression, and are highly marginalised. They are destined to endure from cradle to grave for no mistake of theirs and face discrimination. Women all over the world are seen lacking access to opportunities, knowledge, skill and even some basic human rights.

Women live in a male dominated world where they have to play manifold roles. They have always been seen in relationship with the other. A woman is always supposed to accept herself as secondary to men. Shyness, humility, selflessness, meekness, modesty, and faithfulness are some qualities attributed to her. Black men were oppressed on the level of race and class, whereas Black women were oppressed on one more additional level and that was sex. The triple oppression that these women suffered would have broken the spirit of any one; but this amazing community of women survived through and came out of it with great conviction in their inherent strengths and powers.

Alice Walker's theory goes back to the lived experiences of the whole community of Black women who had been forcefully displaced from their motherland and taken to a foreign world with the basic purpose of exploitation in the form of slavery. These Black women had carried multiple burdens of sustaining their own communities, preserving their cultural heritage and surviving the intense fire of slavery. During the times of slavery it was the Black women's prerogative to pass on their African culture to the new generation who were born miles away from their homelands. This mission was accomplished in the form of story-telling and songs. It was the oral tradition thus transmitted to the younger generations which helped them survive through the harsh realities of their everyday existence. Black feminist critics took the inevitable initiative of rejuvenating and resurrecting forgotten Black women writers and revising the

negative critical views of them. The black feminist critics devised their own feminist theories. They focused wholly on black women's writings and history, not only in the United States but also in other countries. Their main accord is to see how the race, class, and sexuality influence women's lives. One of the most eminent and crucial tenets of black feminist thought clearly shows that the black feminists are concerned with issues like economic survival, racial discrimination, and patriarchy which the white women's movement has failed to address.

African-American feminist critics have endeavoured to give a voice to the problems of double invisibility and double jeopardy which are a result of their being black and female which really isn't their fault. Black feminist thought emphasizes and accentuates masculinity bias and racism, two major factors responsible for the oppression of the black female community. Some of the important themes in the black feminist thought are the sexual politics of black womanhood, black women and motherhood, black women's lesbian relationships and their activism. Walker's characters are oppressed because of their race, class, and gender. These factors form a triangular trap that encloses the social realities of oppressed Afro-American women. The analysed works are the stories of women abused by people around them who are ideally meant to aid them. The stories in both the works are different, and accordingly, the writers representations of the images of oppressed Afro-American women are different. Walker asserts that black women can have agency and voice against injustices and can muster inner strength to fight oppression, exploitation, violence and inequality in a patriarchal society.

Alice Walker's first novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* published in 1970, showcases the evil effects of racism, sexism, classism and gender conflict among patriarchal black society. The dehumanizing aspects of sharecropping under racism have been clearly stated by Walker through the novel. It is also found that how blacks have been undone under white domination for generations together. There is a negative portrayal of men and has shown how black men should be and should not be, through the black male characters in the novel,

rather than demeaning them. Through the novel it has shown a benevolent black male role model and the ideal black man in Grange Copeland. *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970) is a significant novel in the African American literary canon as it vouches and ushers in a new world of possibilities for black men and women despite racism, sexism and classism when one develops womanist awareness to overcome the taboos associated with racism, sexism and classism. It has been stressed on the fact that men need to contribute wellness, nurturance, love, trust, faith and proper understanding of life for the upliftment of their female counterparts and their successive generations. Through the Second novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* it is shown how black men have to really mould themselves, in order to establish true black masculinity, proper family relationships, and a better black community. The findings of the novel depict the sufferings of past blacks women oppression caused by racism and sexism under the patriarchal system. It is been derived on three generations of a black family trying to survive in a world, torn by racism, sexism and classism that are heightened by the patriarchal system. The patriarchal system under which past blacks lived was one full of labor, and never-ending slavery for generations of blacks without any hope to come out of it. Therefore, through the first chapter it has been found that black woman's search for self-worth.

The Third novel *Meridian* gives a voice for black women in American society and made them self-confidence socially, emotionally and spiritually. Racial discrimination, patriarchal oppression, gender violence, the Civil Right Movement and slavery, these subjects shape the core of the novel *Meridian* works. Walker was the first female who coined 'Womanism' a term of black feminism which affricates women's culture, women's strength and women's flexibility. It is found that walker's novel *Meridian* tells the themes through her heroines in order to offer the reader a real depiction and insightful message for all the world by the ill treatment, marginalization and multi faced exploitation that most of Afro- American women have been suffering for centuries.

It is observed that patriarchal oppression and Gender discrimination tells the impoverished and humiliated women and consider a complex social relationship. The writer gives a new definition to 'Sexuality and Sexual Identity in the novel *The Color Purple* through the black female characters.

Alice Walker shares the reflected specifically in some works through her protagonists like, Celie, Margret, Sofia, and Nitte, who are black Afro American women suffering from a lot of offence and oppression. Walker undoubtedly made a great contribution to African American literature, as well as feminist literature in general, with her works that focus on women and their lives. By depicting the pains and strengths of black women, Alice Walker managed to penetrate every aspect of their oppression, and various ways in which they are able to overcome it. The discrimination she wrote about can be found in all aspects of one's life, from domestic to working environment, and it is still present today. Black women face racial oppression already in their childhood, and it extends into the adult life, becoming even more intense and causing them to be insecure and unable to fulfill their potential.

As a result, they are not happy and fulfilled, and they are living in constant oppression. However, Walker's characters know how to fight for themselves, and she often portrays them as strong, independent women, or women who are at first victims of racism and sexism, but through the story evolve into fully formed characters who stand on their own two feet. Gender role stereotypes are proved to be unimportant and the women of these novels find their own identity and learn to be strong and free despite the discrimination they are surrounded with. Walker realistically portrayed the oppression and difficulties black women must cope with throughout their lives, and surely made those problems more understandable to the readers of her stories and novels. Sometimes brutally realistic and graphic in her depiction of women's struggles, she lays it all out for the reader, showing that a black woman's life is indeed a tough one. But the main idea is that there is no space for giving up. Although sometimes stumbling

under the difficulty of their situations, the women of her works mostly come out as emancipated and strong personalities, setting an example for all those who find themselves in similar situations today.

To conclude, the novels of contemporary black feminist writer Alice Walker *The Color Purple*, *Meridian* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* have portrayed the impact of multi-faced oppression and prejudice that have been practiced against black women during American male dominating society. Through her heroines like Celie, Sofia, Meridian and Margret Walker succeed in exposing the afflictions and misery of colored women. The black characters in Walker's novels attempt to tolerate gender discrimination, patriarchal practices, racial attitudes and sexual abuse.

Thus, this study A CRITICAL STUDY OF WOMEN OPPRESSION IN ALICE WALKER's SELECT NOVELS traces the plight of black women and their struggle for survival examines the black women's injustice in African American patriarchal society.

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